BOOKABLE OFFENCE

The *When Saturday Comes* Special No.2

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LAWS
UNTO THEMSELVES

British referees are among the best in the world. Jack Taylor, the butcher from Wolverhampton, is universally acknowledged as an all-time great. But there are many others — like one-armed Alf Bond, who refereed the 1956 Cup Final, one-eyed Joe Worrall, Arthur Ellis (*It's A Knockout!*), Clive Thomas ('It's A Cock-up!') and Emlyn Hughes — the only man to regularly control matches without having to wear a black shirt, and confusingly also known in later years as 'The Mad Butcher of Wolverhampton'. These men reached eminence through a sound knowledge of the Laws of the Game, firm but fair application of them, and common sense.

There are only 17 Laws but it took 150 years for them to evolve to their present state. The major milestones have been chronicled by our historian from Lancaster Gate, with details of the events and men who made them happen.

1848 The first set of rules was drawn up at Cambridge University.

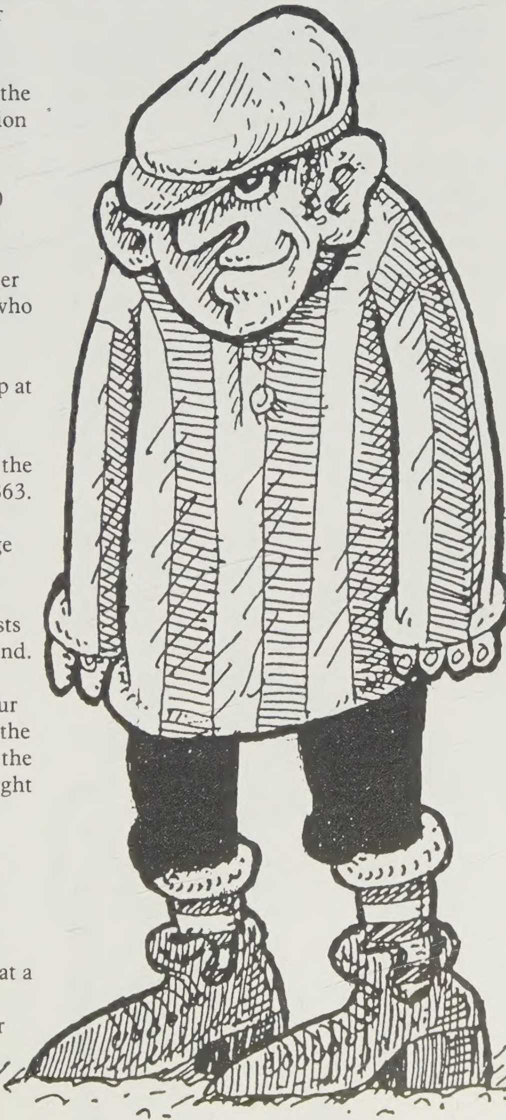
1863 The rules were first published in the magazine *Bell's Life*, on December 5th 1863. Thus games were played for over fifteen years with only the students at Cambridge knowing the rules.

1865 Tape was stretched across the posts for the first time, eight feet from the ground. This was necessary because of the Old Astonians, whose goalkeeper was only four feet six inches tall. The interpretation at the time was that a shot had to pass between the posts and below the goalkeeper's head height to score, and the little blighter always ducked. After protests by the Royal Engineers, whose goalkeeper was six feet seven, the uniform eight feet height was introduced.

1866 The offside rule was altered so that a player was onside when there were only three opponents nearer to the goal, rather than the previous four. Bull of The Wanderers immediately took full advantage, scoring 54 goals in 30 games, though a rival manager who had previously sold him for a small fee still maintained that his *"first touch was awful."*

At the same time, the fair catch rule was omitted, preventing defenders 'making a mark' and taking a free kick if they caught the ball.

1869 Goal kicks were introduced. Prior to this, 'keepers like Cumbes of Tranmere were at an advantage since he could throw the ball from one goal area to the other. Unfortunately, he rarely managed to save a shot.



1871 Goalkeepers were first mentioned in the Laws. For the previous twenty-three years the 'one with the cap' was the player who was allowed to handle the ball. This had caused some confusion since every player in Yorkshire wore a cloth cap.

1872 The corner kick was introduced. Again, Cumbes (now of West Bromwich Strollers) was a direct influence since he would attempt to throw the ball direct into the opposition's net from the corner, and if he failed he had to run back quickly. He let a lot of goals in doing this.

1874 Umpires were first mentioned in the Laws. Each team provided their own referee, who would dress in normal clothes and stay off the pitch, while the umpire controlled the game. 40,000 'referees' still regularly attend matches at Old Trafford.

1875 The crossbar replaced tape. Apparently, Fatty Lawrence threatened to use the tape to strangle any forward that dared to venture within 30 yards of his goal.

1877 The London Association and Sheffield agreed to adopt the same rules (110 years or so later, Wimbledon and Sheffield United split away again).

1878 Umpires used whistles for the first time. Prior to this they used rattles, though there was the odd extrovert who played a mouth organ.

1882 The two-handed throw-in was introduced. Woodruff of Wolves reputedly threw the ball so far that it went out for a throw in on the other side of the field.

1890 Goal nets were first used. They were invented by a Liverpudlian engineer, JA Brodie. Interestingly, they were first used by Bolton Wanderers in their match versus Nottingham Forest on 1st January. They

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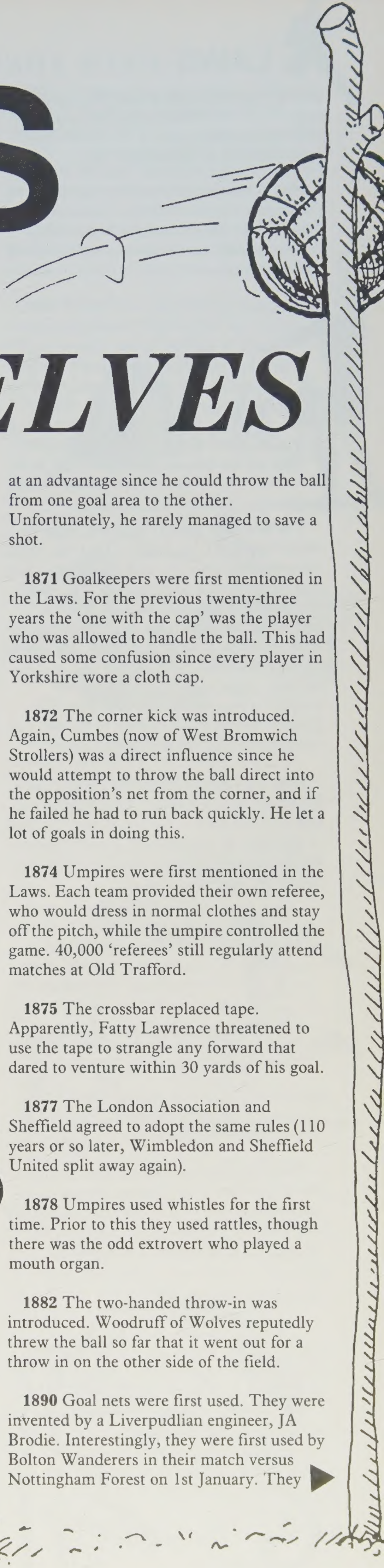
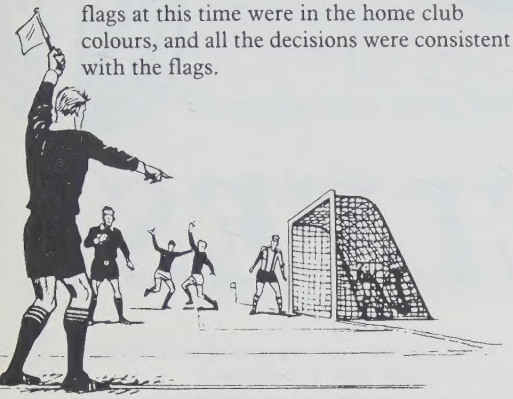


were not used at Anfield until the League made them compulsory. If a Liverpool shot went within three yards of the posts a goal was invariably awarded until 1902.

1891 A referee and two linesmen replaced the umpire and two referees. Linesmen's flags at this time were in the home club colours, and all the decisions were consistent with the flags.



The first ever penalty kick was taken on March 6th 1891, by Airdrie. This was rather embarrassing since the addition to the Laws was not supposed to come into effect until the following season. The Law was introduced because of an incident in a game between Notts County and Stoke. Hendry of County punched a shot off the line, and as the Law stood at the time, the referee awarded a free kick on the goal line. The County 'keeper stood in front of the ball and, not surprisingly, Stoke failed to score.

1892 An amendment to the Penalty Kick Law prevented the kicker from playing the ball a second time. This was to stop the likes of Johnston of Rangers and Best of Newton Heath from taking the mickey by dribbling round the 'keeper.

1894 The referee had complete control of the game. Previously, linesmen gave decisions in their half of the field, as opposed to signalling and letting the referee act or overrule as appropriate. Liverpool had benefited from some strange decisions, especially at home, and rumours of bribery and intimidation were rife. Some things never change.

From 1894 there was no need to appeal. This considerably benefited Wycombe Mute Wanderers. Adams, the England defender, ignored the change and continued to run around with an arm permanently in the air, shouting *"Howzat?"*

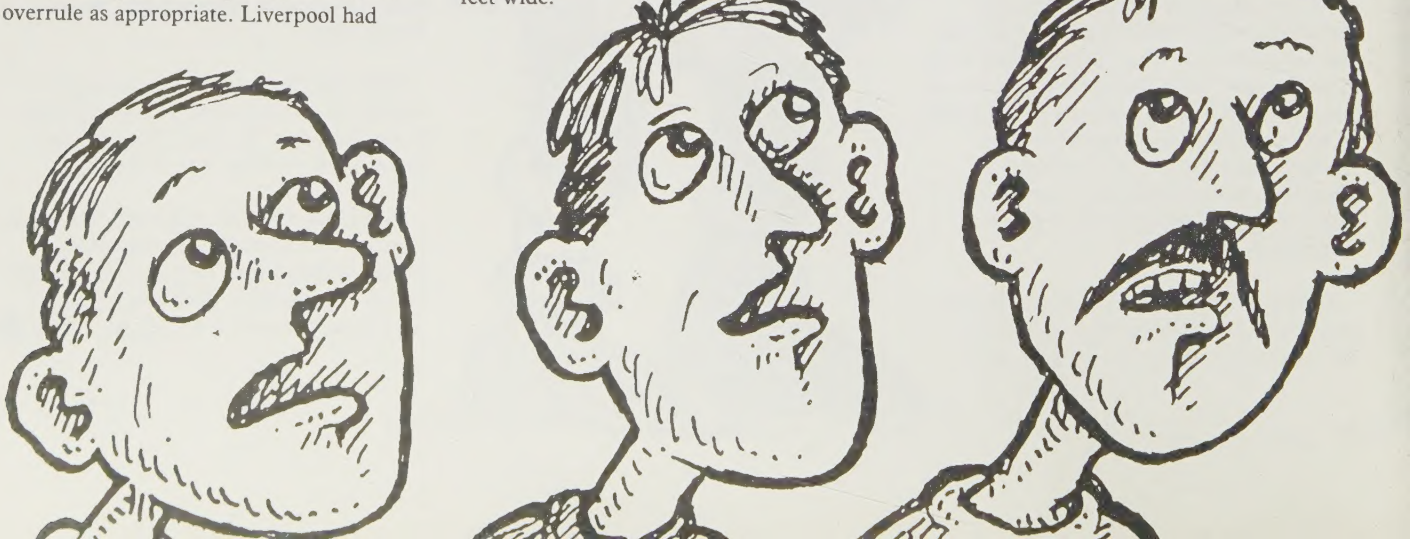
A third change occurred this year which meant that the goalkeeper could only be charged when playing the ball or obstructing an opponent. Sixty years later McParland of Villa and Lofthouse of Bolton resurrected this forgotten art.

1895 Legislation was introduced limiting posts and crossbars to five inches in width. The previous season Middlesbrough had set a new record low of only two goals conceded at home because their posts were over three feet wide.

Also in 1895, a player taking a throw-in had to stand on the touchline for the first time. McMurdo of Montrose used to go into the stand to retrieve the ball and quickly throw it from the fifth row of the seats when the defenders weren't looking.

1903 The penalty area was defined — 18 yards by 44 yards. Before this, the 12 yard line stretched right across the pitch and any foul within this area resulted in a penalty, even if the offence was committed out by the touchline. This explains why most teams of the era played with five wingers.

1905 The 'dropped ball' was introduced. Until 1905 the referee threw the ball up, like a basketball tip-off. While the ball was in the air and everyone was looking skywards, certain uncompromising players kicked lumps out of their opponents. A player named Jones actually grabbed a forward by the testicles in a celebrated case.

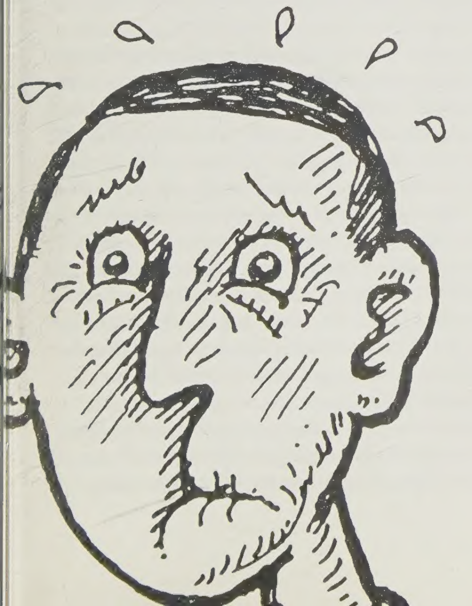


A further piece of legislation passed in 1905 ensured that the 'keeper had to stand on the goal line when a penalty was taken. He did not have to stand still, however. Sprinters like Stevenson of Burnley could rush out up to six yards. Prior to the new rule 'keepers like Newton Heath's Leighton would stand in the back of the net and rush out screaming and waving his arms, while others like Simms of Aston Jammy Dodgers would intimidate kickers by pulling faces at them.

1912 An infamous incident occurred in the 1912 Cup Final which ultimately led to Barnsley's greatest claim to fame. Full back Dicky Downs was being treated for an injury behind the goal when West Bromwich Albion seemed certain to score. Downs rushed back on and cleared the ball off the line and Barnsley went on to win after a replay. From then on the Laws were changed so that players could not re-enter the field of play without the referee's permission.

1913 Defenders must retreat 10 yards from free kicks. For some unknown reason this Law is still not applied.

1914 Defenders must retreat 10 yards from corners. See above.



1925 The Offside Law was changed again, only two players instead of three being necessary for a player to be onside. In a twenty year career for Newcastle, Bill McCracken never ever made a tackle but simply rushed forward to put forwards offside.

Players had to keep both feet on or behind the touchline for throw-ins. There was a third change in 1925. On 17th January, Sam Chedgzoy, the Everton winger, dribbled the ball from the corner flag, and scored the goal which beat Spurs. The Law was amended to prevent the corner-taker playing the ball a second time before another player had touched it.

1929 Goalkeepers had to stand still at penalty kicks. This prevented Farquharson of Cardiff racing forward and kicking the ball away before the penalty taker had taken the kick!

1933 Numbers were worn for the first time. Though not strictly a change in the Laws, this at least served to identify players so that referees could be certain of booking the right culprit. No referee has ever made a mistake since. Except.....

1936 Defenders were no longer permitted to tap the ball into the 'keeper's hands from goal kicks. Portsmouth's main tactical strategy was destroyed at a stroke.

1937 As above for free kicks inside the penalty area. The weight of the ball was increased from 13-15 ounces to 14-16 ounces (3-4 stones at the end of the game on a wet pitch) and a 10 yard arc was first drawn from the penalty spot. No player has ever encroached from a penalty kick since.

1948 The first linesmen's flags in red and yellow were used. Previously they were in club colours (see 1891). The first such flags were made from dusters, the official reason being that it was a foggy day and they could be seen more clearly. In fact, the proper flags had been pinched.

1951 Obstruction resulted in an indirect free kick (except for a period in the Sixties and Seventies when any attempt at a tackle on Francis Lee was a penalty, and, of course, there are different interpretations at Anfield to this day).

Studs had to be three-quarters of an inch long, a 50 percent increase in the previous minimum, and an open licence to cloggers.

1965 Substitutes were first permitted for an injured player. This led to the 'Leeds Phenomenon', which baffled medical science. Apparently fit players suddenly collapsed and had to be substituted. Curiously, this seemed to happen when Leeds scored or conceded a goal. No explanation was ever found for the disabling virus but it magically cleared up the next year — see below.

1966 Substitutes were allowed for any reason, without players having to feign injury. Now, every team replaced forwards with defenders to hang on to one goal leads.

1989 An experimental rule change was quietly slipped in. The first occurrence was West Brom versus Wolves, when Albion 'keeper Naylor caught the ball and was promptly penalised for holding it too long. The resulting free kick cost a goal and the match, but was considered such fun that it was repeated in the Everton v Nottingham Forest fixture, this time Southall being chosen as the victim. Strangely only a few referees operated the change, without telling the clubs or the players.

1990 Despite International Board decisions stopping attackers obstructing goalkeepers, Forest and one referee clearly believe it is permissible to head the ball from the 'keepers hands. Is another historic law change on the way?

There will certainly be a change to Law XI, offside. The original suggestion, from a journalist, took three years to pass through all the various FIFA committees. In future if an attacker is level with the last defender he will be on side, the theory being that forwards will be given the benefit of the doubt leading to more attacking play. We'll see. It will take a journalist to re-phrase the law which reads very simply, *"a player is in an offside position if he is nearer to his opponent's goal line than the ball, unless...there are at least two of his opponents nearer their own goal line than he is."* When will we have the first law change suggested by *WSC* or its readers?

Neil Reynolds

Satu

Schoolboy matches are a regular occurrence at Wembley but there can't have been many involving eight year olds. Andy Lynam explains all....

I grew up in the Sixties — in a dull, publess suburb of London called Wembley. For a kid, or at least those in my gang, the saving grace of the area was a huge adventure playground called Wembley Stadium, where much of our spare time was spent. By the age of ten, the four of us probably knew more about the place than anyone who worked there. Like the two broken turnstiles that could be walked through by the ticketless — if only they knew — on match day, or how to climb up onto the roof, and how to get up behind the scoreboard or into the press box.

When we eventually outgrew hide-and-seek, the sport of groundsman-baiting was developed. The aim was to be chased but not caught. There were several ways of provoking this happy result, but the best-liked was simply to run on the pitch and start booting a ball around. (Three-and-in at Wembley has a certain *je ne sais quoi*). While we were busy scoring last minute Cup Final winners, or heroically saving Scottish penalties, the first, *"Oi you! Git orf!"* would burst out from the other end. We'd carry on scoring twenty-yard thunderbolts and diving headers as the voices got louder and nearer. Fortunately, the voice usually belonged to gouty old scroats whose running days were long since over. The closest I ever came to being caught was the time I blindly ran straight into the goal, and had to scramble frantically under the unpegged net to escape the clutches of the geriatric beast in pursuit. I made it, but the old boy didn't, and the last I remember as we ran for the tunnel was the sight of him floundering desperately in the net like a lobster. Same colour too, no doubt.

Another popular pursuit was the search for the secret tunnel. The story was that ticketless Liverpool fans, desperate to see the 1965 Cup Final, had dug a tunnel under the wall to get in. The clear impossibility of such a feat, even for Liverpool fans — whom we regarded as second only to Scots in the Beasts from Outer Space League — didn't deter a bunch of eight-year-olds, fresh from yet another screening of *The Great Escape*, from spending many an afternoon poking

rday's Kids

around with sticks in the bushes behind the stadium, hoping to find a concealed entrance in the undergrowth.

For the six months leading up to the World Cup in 1966, and for about a year afterwards, our fun was supplemented by the groups of foreign tourists who'd arrive to peer at the place. Years before the current management hit on the obvious idea of selling guided tours, we were charging foreigners a bob or two to show them around. The tour would usually end in the Royal Box, where they'd sit gaping for a few minutes before the inevitable, *"Oi you! Git out of it!"* came echoing up from some quarter.

Quite often, these cross-cultural liaisons would finish with an impromptu game of football in the car-park outside. On one memorable occasion, when the rain had emptied the stadium of groundstaff, we were able to stage a half-hour, six-a-side match on the pitch against a Mercedesful of middle-aged Argentinians, their Nikons bouncing around on their pot-bellies. The game finished 8-4. I, er, scored five incidentally — the last from a disputed penalty. So disputed in fact that the England squad had to run off up the West Terrace to escape.

> ***"The scam was simple. You get a bit of paper. You scribble 'Pele', or 'Lev Yashin' on it. Then you sell it to some earnest Scandinavian or German for five bob. Had we played our cards right we could have made a tidy living for years."***

Another example of youthful enterprise/racial exploitation was the Great Eusebio Forged Autograph Scandal of 1966. During and after the World Cup, we made quite a decent living from selling worthless scraps of paper to foreigners. The scam was simple. You get a bit of paper. You scribble 'Pele', or 'Lev Yashin' on it. Then you sell it to some earnest Scandinavian or German for five bob. Had we played our cards right we could have made a tidy living for years. But the enterprise was brought down by greed and a lack of corporate planning and coordination.

When the flow of tourists began to dry up, we shifted the focus of our operations to school. We discreetly sold 'Uwe Seeler' for ninepence, 'Rattin' for one and six. The fatal move was to believe that teachers could be as gullible as tourists and fellow nine-year-olds. I sold 'Eusebio' for half a crown to Mr Naghten one lunchtime. Before I could communicate this success to the rest of the syndicate, tragedy struck. It appears that Ollie, by horrible co-incidence, had also tried selling the same autograph. His signature was small and precise, while mine was large and flamboyant. That afternoon in the Headmaster's office, the Great Eusebio Forged Autograph Scandal came to a painful end.

It was only after the World Cup that I began to watch football at Wembley, managing almost every game between 1967 and 1973. Despite just missing out on the lads in '66, I reckon that this six year period was as good for football as any other — before or since. United in the European Cup Final in '68, Don Rogers and Swindon in '69, Chelsea-Leeds in '70, Arsenal-Liverpool in '71, Sunderland in '73. (Nothing much happened at Wembley in 1972 apart from England losing a couple of games, and the bewildering appearance of Stoke.)

Getting in was no problem for kids of our age. Small enough to crawl under the turnstile while the old bloke behind the mesh enjoyed a coughing fit. Cheeky enough to scrounge ticket stubs through the gates from those inside, then explain tearfully to a kindly constable that you'd lost the other half, and please would they have a word with the turnstile man. But the usual method was to stand around looking forlorn. Surprisingly often, this would produce the offer of a spare ticket from some old buffer from the counties, or from a ticket-rich director of Hartlepool or Torquay, unable to round up enough diehards to make the long trip in midweek.

The first football match I ever saw was the 1967 League Cup Final between QPR and West Brom. It was also one of the very few Wembley games I paid to attend. In those days you could call into the stadium box office a week or two before the match and buy a ticket. You didn't need a barcoded forehead, or a certificate of acceptability from the local police, or even any passport-sized photos. You simply popped in on your way home from school with your seven and sixpence, and you were okay.

On the morning of the game, we marched the few hundred yards to the stadium with our banner flapping violently in the stiff March wind, and sweeping along sundry passers-by in its ample folds. Our response to complainants was to cry, in shrill nine-year-old voices, *"We're gonna win the Cup!"* It didn't seem to cut much ice with the grumpy locals on their way to Sainsbury's.

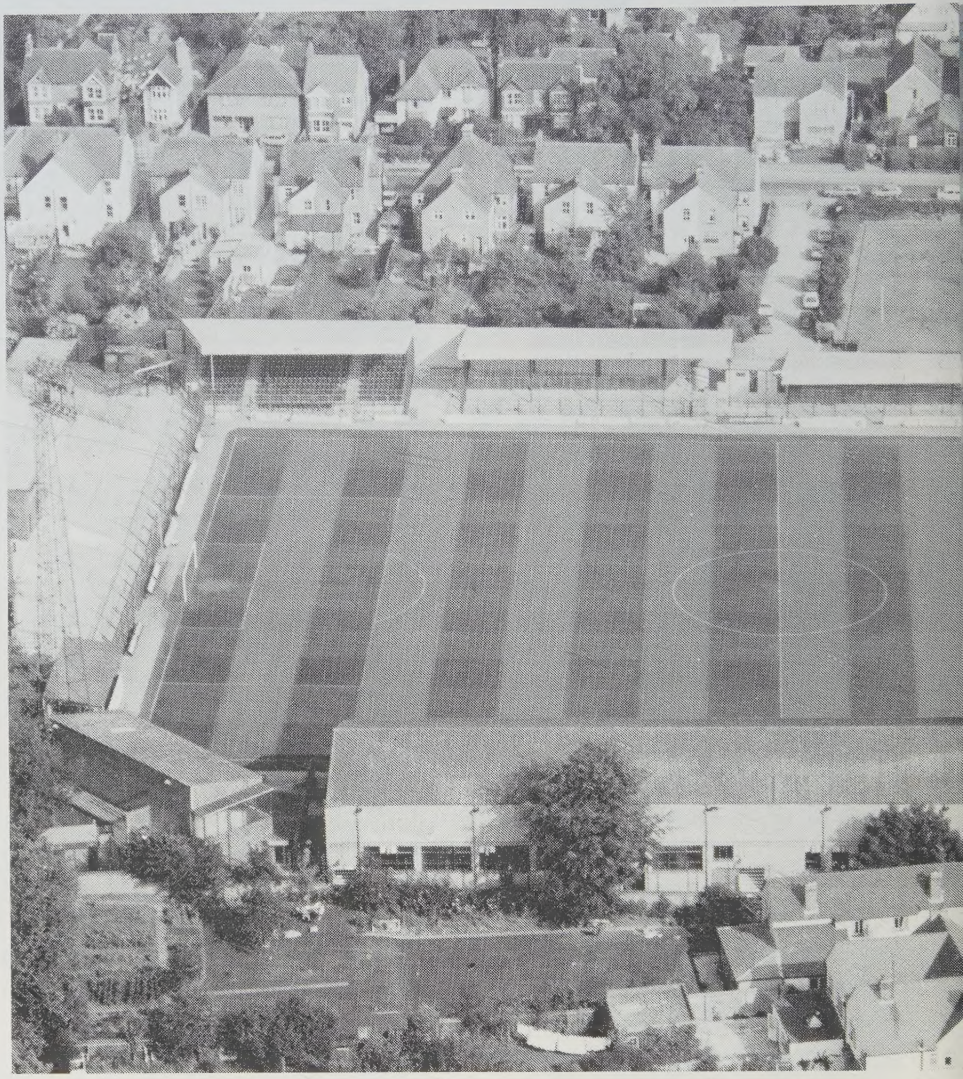
The first half was a blur. Just now and then the towering grown-up bodies that blocked our view would part fortuitously, and I'd see Mark Lazarus scurrying up the wing like a crab on amphetamines, or Peter Springett bending down to collect the ball from the QPR net.

At half-time the underdogs were apparently two-nil down and we thought it would be nice to see some football. After all, we had paid for this one. When Rodney Marsh scored that wonderful equalising goal, we were sitting up in the press box, scoffing tea and sandwiches with the grinning man from the *Mirror*. And when Rangers' winning goal came, a few moments from the end, we were down by the Royal Box, ready to embrace the team as they came up to collect the Cup. At the age of nine, experiences like that are formative. I became a QPR man, and slowly — as the Seventies progressed — Loftus Road became even more familiar to me than Wembley had been.

I've been back to Wembley several times in the 1980s, and there's no doubt that, compared with the national stadia of other countries, and even many British League grounds, the place is fairly decrepit. Despite a few coats of paint and the silky assurances of the Wembley PR team, it's still inconvenient, uncomfortable and expensive. The case for building a new national arena, particularly while the Hillsborough hangover is with us, is strong, and the argument that we should be staging England games at Old Trafford or Villa Park has surely now been won. But I still can't quite stomach the idea of a Cup Final at the Nuneaton Ultrabowl, or whatever. Indeed, the growing enthusiasm for turning grounds into supermarkets, and replacing them with zippy out-of-town all-seaters, might well be judged by future generations as the football hooliganism of the 1990s. Despite its faults, Wembley represents more than a shred of a shared mythology, and to see your team score in a final there is still the greatest pleasure available in English football. Well, apart from knocking in five yourself against Argentina.

Andrew Lynam

To The Ma



"These are the streets from which people tramp up to the Manor, and these are the pubs where we talk not of Eights and bumps but of Stein and Foster, Aldridge and Hamilton, Curran and Roberts."

Probably it's best of all on a clear evening when the sky darkens sometime after six, the light dimming in anticipation of floodlit drama. Fumble with laces and zips, wind the scarf with gentle folds. Unlikely, that a four-foot strip of yellow and blue should command such affection.

"Please God, don't let the phone ring now."

The door never closes properly first time and has to be slammed shut. A brisk stride, hands in pockets, on to the Iffley Road. If I was off to work, I'd wait for the bus; but a football night demands the walk uphill, a familiar route, familiar thoughts of other, more remarkable evenings. Jeremy Charles' last-ditch header, gaining our first home point in Division One. A Dave Langan chip, four months earlier, taking us to the threshold of glory.

No need, on a Wednesday, for the bulk of a radio against the chest. But there'll be the ancient game, come quarter past nine, of escaping the ground before we hear the final scores that would ruin a late evening's television. Nobody will trail behind the fans with radios, trying to pick up scores and snippets. Wednesday night is very different to Saturday afternoon.

No need either for a futile visit to the bookies. So press on, past the off-licence, chippie, car showroom, and right into Magdalen Road. Strangely named, with it's title redolent of the university. A college with a Deer Park, a floodlit choir greeting the affluent throng on May Day morning — Workers' Day all over the world, but not in Oxford. The road itself, with its local theatre, its Asian-run grocers, its cramped and grubby housing, is a very different world from the Oxford people visit, but typical of the town people live in. These are the streets from which people tramp up to the Manor, and these are the pubs where we talk not of Eights and bumps but of Stein and Foster, Aldridge and Hamilton, Curran and Roberts. And remember the evenings when nobody felt like drinking, when we were humiliated by Fulham and Bristol City, when a disinterested Sheffield Wednesday side proved beyond doubt that we were down and out and the glory days were over.

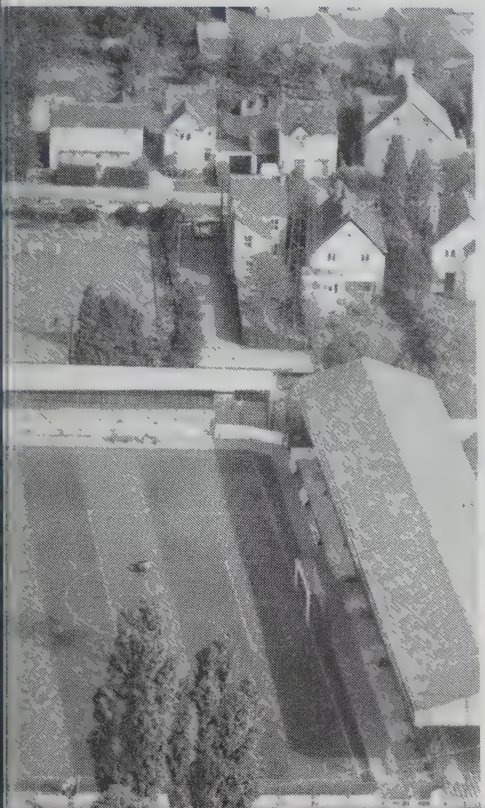
Time was, I would make my way to the Manor by trespassing through the golf course and trudging through the long wet grass behind the hospital, past nettles and accumulated litter and the occasional discarded condom (lovers leap a little more cautiously nowadays). These days I put up with the direct route up Headington Hill. Walk back down here on a Saturday afternoon, and when the curtains are open you can see into the pinched sitting rooms and watch the residents sitting round their televisions watching the results come up.

And you wonder — if they're so interested, why weren't they at the match?

But despite the window posters demanding 'No Poll Tax' and stating 'This Council House Is Not for Sale', much of this area is Studentland, and the cynical eye looks not just for bicycle stacked against the wall but for unkempt gardens and wine bottles on tables in basement kitchens. Sometimes this gives me pause for thought as the gradient steepens and slows me down. I remember prayers and gowns and mindless chatter. I think back to picky tutorials, the worship of knowledge and the disdain for understanding. And then I recall the passion of Cup victory against Arsenal, the courage of John Aldridge, injured while scoring, Jennings dropping Langan's hopeful shot into the net for the winner. I remember the tumult when Les Phillips killed off Everton on a cool April evening. And I understand again one reason why this ordinary provincial club means so much to us.

In Oxford, the university sits down on the riverbank, and the town looks down on it from the hillside. It just seems like the other way round. For visitors and novelists, there is only one Oxford, and it's not ours. Most of the money and history lies to the west of the plain. Yet most of those who revel in it are strangely itinerant, staying only some of the year, for only a few years. They seal themselves off, making careers by making contacts, self-congratulatory and snobbish in their disinterest in a society many of them control already, or will inherit control of. And the people of Oxford appear to them solely as servants and shop assistants, people with no intellectual contribution to make, people beneath notice. Nor do they notice the ache of resentment.

nor . . .



But we have our own pride, and our own aesthetics. The grace of Brock and Houghton, the shuddering courage of Briggs and Hamilton, the comic figure of Whitehurst, the commanding personality of Malcolm Shotton. They have their college productions and their careers in drama. But we have our own theatre.

That's why the step quickens when the hill relents, between the park and the hospital. You can hardly help it, no matter how much time you have to spare. Fellow supporters are normally first seen striding past the Poly, trotting through the traffic, shuffling against the wind. Even on the warmest of Spring evenings, you expect to pinch your face against the cold, and watch breath escape in a vapour. Memory produces its own adrenalin, and you almost break into a trot, in case a moment might be missed. Like I missed most of the triumphs of 1983-84, the ten-man defeat of Newcastle, the crushing of Leeds. Biggins' looping winner against Manchester United. Even Brock's tragic back pass to Adrian Heath. Why do we hurry when what we normally get is thoughtless mediocrity? Because we're afraid we'll stay away when they finally show a classic melodrama. There's no way of knowing — there are no reviewers, no *Halliwell* for football.

Through the Valentia Road Estate, where you can park all week long, except before a football match. You can take a long time to cross to the Manor side of the road; spend it wondering why the coppers lounging by the lights only direct the traffic *after* the game. If you want scarves, caps, badges, you won't find anyone selling them, but you can get a programme for eighty pence. Soon, probably a quid. (Have you ever bought a programme that cost *ninety* pence? Is it illegal?) The ground is still almost invisible, surrounded (on three sides) by flats, houses, and (homely touch) a bowling green. Present your season ticket, bearing the legend *Mirrorcard.* Trot past the slowest burger queue in football, skip up the steps. And there it is, laid in front of you.

Now you understand why Wednesday nights are special. The London Road terrace is steep, and close up against the pitch. The stand is small and the roof is low, and there is little room between its front edge and the top of a high fence. On a floodlit evening, the effect can be a hushed claustrophobia. The pitch slopes towards that end, adding to an intimidatory atmosphere. We always hope to play downhill in the second half. The crowd seems to reach forward for a corner, and the opposition are afraid.

These are the evenings that make us love the Manor, even when we've been hemmed in by fences, threatened by barbed wire. These are *raw* evenings, when the heroes have often been men full more of passion than sophistication. Peter Rhoades-Brown, playing kick and rush in front of a howling Osler Road. Billy Hamilton, completing a triumphant hat-trick in extra time against Blackburn. Les Phillips, bustling through the defence to take us past Villa and on to Wembley.

Is this what Colin Moynihan and his ilk despise so much? How did they develop their contempt for football and its supporters? Maybe it's just its honesty that frightens them? A goal is a goal, and three points mean precisely that. With none of the evasive hair-splitting of a philosophy tutorial, none of the lies of politicians. Or perhaps it's simply the ability of football to move the passions of millions. Far better for them to stick to the boorishness and sterile masculinity of their boat houses and rugby club bars. And the rabble can watch their slum sport under prison camp conditions. Shame we couldn't make them carry ID Cards.

We will still have our sport in seasons to come, despite their best efforts. And we still have *our* club to follow, not a conglomerate in Didcot. But just at the moment, we're still waiting for new heroes at the Manor: for all the good performances lately, the memories of the mid-Eighties are too fresh for anything less than dramatic, floodlit triumph to feel like quite enough.

But there *will* be other times, fresh glory to savour, and it will feel just as good, even with the fences, even with the smaller crowds, even now the Osler Road has shed its rugged cowshed look for a grey functional roof. Mark Stein the new Steve Biggins? To Steve Foster the mantle of Malcolm Shotton? If they have it in them, it will surely be the floodlit stage that sees their finest performance. Come and see us play, on some enchanted evening. Wednesday night at the Manor, ever fallen in love?

. . . Born

Ed Horton

MY TEAM

LEONID BREZHNEV ON LEEDS UTD

LEONID BREZHNEV, zany Secretary-General of the Soviet Communist Party, hopes the new spirit of *glasnost* that's sweeping through the country will one day result in him having his own TV show, just like that of his rugged predecessor Josef Stalin. Because, like Genocidal Joe, Leonid has a big secret up his sleeve — he was once Leeds United's number one fan!

“No one in my immediate family was interested in football. Apparently my Great Uncle Vanya once expressed a fondness for Ararat Erevan FC, but then he'd been in a lunatic asylum for thirty years so that's hardly surprising.

Later, when I started in politics, I used to wear a Dinamo Tbilisi scarf to the office. Everybody did. Joe Stalin was a Georgian and it was wise to keep on the right side of him.

It wasn't until 1965 that I was truly bitten by the soccer bug. Nikita invited the Politburo round to the Kremlin to watch the FA Cup Final. Much to everyone else's delight the Reds won. I, however, was disappointed, for, with the first of his legendary midfield purges, little Billy Bremner had captured my heart!

From then on I was hooked. Many's the time, during one of my seven hour monologues on sugarbeet production in Buryat SSR, I've wished I was thousands of miles away, standing on the terraces at Elland Road, pressed shoulder-to-shoulder with proletarian Yorkshire folk, our voices raised in exhortation. On one occasion I got so carried away with my daydream I inadvertently interrupted a speech to the hero-workers of the Lenin Memorial Wire Factory, Minsk, by shouting *“Grab his bollocks, Sniffer!”* That was one moment when I was thankful for state suppression of the press, I can tell you.

Naturally enough I tried to keep my passion for Leeds United a secret, but somehow it must have leaked out. It was only moments after our nil-nil home draw with Dinamo Zagreb had given them an aggregate victory in the Fairs Cup Final that I received the first of the taunting phone calls which would make my life a misery in months to come. *“Two-nil, two-nil, two-nil,”* jeered the caller in his unmistakeable Yugoslav accent. I had always disliked Tito — this time though he had gone too far. I called the lads round to get the go ahead for an immediate invasion. That crazy Ukrainian Kosygin objected. He said if we were going to invade anywhere it should be Poland, on account of Gornik had just dumped Kiev out of the Champions' Cup. Eventually Andropov suggested a compromise. I think Dubcek had really irritated him by wearing his Slovan Bratislava bobble hat to a Comintern meeting.

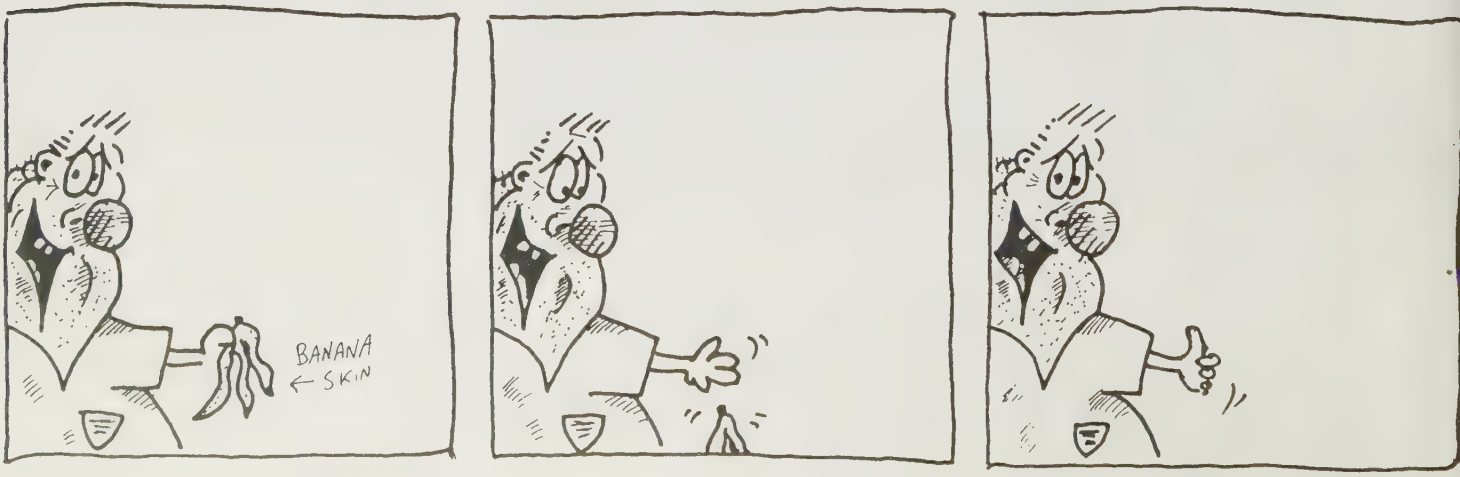
I can't remember the successes too well — this must be something to do with my stolid and fatalistic peasant background. Instead it's the failures that live so vividly in my memory: Bayern Munich, Colchester, Chelsea, West Brom, Juventus and, of course, Sunderland. Boy was I mad after that fiasco! I ran straight over to the Lubianka and tried to organise a hit on Bob Stokoe. They wouldn't do it. *“Dirty tricks, murder and torture are one thing, boss,”* the head honcho Mikhail told me, *“but don't ever ask us to go to Sunderland.”* I saw a photo of the place later and I have to admit, I saw his point.

Unfortunately the pressure of being a world leader has meant that I've never been able to see my team in the flesh. It's a source of great sadness to me that I've never seen any football played at Elland Road.

Since the glory days we've had our share of downs, but now it seems we're on the way back up. People say Howard Wilkinson's Leeds team are a little on the dull side, but I don't agree. Mind you, I have been dead for a number of years.”

Interview: Harry Pearson

GAZZER THE CLOWN – HE'S AS DAFT AS A BRUSH!



TROPHY BITTER

If there was an award for the most meaningless football tournament of the Eighties, there would not be a lack of candidates. Remember that evening wasted at the Screen Sport Super Cup match? Or that £3.50 thrown away on the Mercantile Credit Centenary Trophy Quarter-Final?

To find the winning nomination, however, cast your mind back a little further, to the Summer of 1981. It was a time when Ian Botham was single-handedly defeating the Aussies on Test grounds up and down the country. It also saw the start of another, maybe not quite so momentous sporting event in England. Yes, the Group Cup was born. It came about when the Anglo-Scottish Cup finally died at the end of the 1980-81 season, the Scottish clubs having moaned about the lack of top English clubs entering. The Football League came up with a replacement competition which involved thirty-two teams initially split into eight sections of four. It lacked a sponsor so the League management committee, with typical flair, came up with The Group Cup.

Or at least that's how we think it came about. That was the real beauty of the GC. At the time it was being played no-one really knew anything about it. The national dailies weren't interested as it didn't involve the likes of Liverpool and Manchester United. Even the clubs who took part, one felt, were a little embarrassed by the whole thing, producing wafer-thin programmes for most games. Gillingham even resorted to a three match triple issue for their games against Orient and Southend in the GC and West Ham in a friendly.

Loosely speaking, the Northern Section consisted of sides Frank Worthington had played for, while competing clubs in the South had to have employed Barry Silkman at sometime in his career.

The competition 'took off' on August 15th 1981 — which just happened to be one of the hottest days of the Summer. Ideal for putting one's feet up in the garden, enjoying the sun and listening to Arlott and Johnston on the radio. Indeed, lowest attendance records all over the country were smashed almost as frequently as Dennis Lillee's bowling was being hammered that Summer. A crowd of 658 crammed into Turf Moor to see Burnley take on Watford, 1,567 packed Gay Meadow for Shrewsbury v Chester.

One wonders just how many of the forty thousand or so diehards who were there at the birth of the Group Cup actually regretted their decision at the end of the afternoon. I was privileged to be there at the outset to see Orient take on Southend at Brisbane Road. Of the 1,806 at Leyton that day, a good thousand or so appeared to be stuffed into the directors' box watching John Chiedozie. It was no secret that the O's had to sell their most prized asset before the start of the season proper, and the spectators present included a Who's Who of London football at the time — Lyall, Nicholson, Noades, Gradi etc.

By the time Chiedozie had waltzed past a stationary Shrimpers defence for the last time three minutes before the end to put us 2-0 up, most of the big names had either left or dozed off. Stan Bowles, as ever, had done his best by colliding with referee John Deakin and knocking him out, but it was all a bit futile.

The competition really came to the boil the following Saturday, with the last of the First Round group games. Unlike the Leyland DAF, where almost everyone seems to qualify for the knockout stage, only one out of the four teams could go through to the Quarter-Finals. Thus, there were some uniquely meaningless matches, with my vote for the game of the tournament going to Hull v Hartlepool. Both teams had lost their opening two fixtures, so it became the definitive nothing match. One really can't begin to contemplate the atmosphere amongst the 1,621 packed into Boothferry Park that afternoon. Hull ended 1-0 victors with Keith Edwards scoring the most unimportant goal of his 200+ career.

With our boys drawing 1-1 at Gillingham thereby also waving goodbye to the competition, the final word from an Orient viewpoint was left to manager Jimmy Bloomfield, *"There's nothing like the League and the FA Cup. In this kind of competition you definitely get some strange results. The crowd don't feel the same about it and neither do I and the players."*

In other words dear old Jimmy was saying the Group Cup was a load of cobblers. The games were being watched in an eerie silence not just because they were boring and the weather was hot, but also because your average man on the terrace did not know what to cheer for. If your team went one up, you couldn't sing *"Wember-lee, Wember-lee"* as you can with the Zenith, and *"We're gonna win the League"* wasn't right as the 'league' consisted of only four teams.

By the end of August, the eight group winners had been decided. The successful teams were then given three-and-a-half months to prepare for the knockout stage. A wave of expectation spread throughout the country. So much so, in fact, that a grand total of 8,839 flooded through the turnstiles to watch the four Quarter-Finals on December 8-9th.

You don't need to be a Jack Rollin to guess that Wimbledon led the way when it came to non-bumper gates. Having disposed of Peterborough to reach the semis, 1,267 stormed Plough Lane on February 16th to see the Dons move into the Final by defeating Burnley 5-0. Grimsby had already beaten Shrewsbury 2-1 a month earlier in the other semi so the nation gripped itself for a final showdown at Blundell Park on 6th April. Grimsby was overcome by 'Group Cup fever' in the three months leading to the Wimbledon match — so much so that the attendance at the Final was double that which had seen their first home tie against Chesterfield back in August. In fact, 3,423 saw Tony Ford achieve footballing immortality by becoming the only player in history to score twice in a Group Cup final as the Mariners squeezed home 3-2.

And there endeth the Group Cup. Not many tears were shed on the terraces. It lacked the novelty of seeing your team play a side from Scotland like its predecessor. There was also no prospect of a trip to those twin towers if your boys did well. Some nine years on, however, certain questions remain unanswered. Does anyone know what happened to the actual trophy? And whatever became of Ian Botham?

Martin Strong

Australian rules ..?

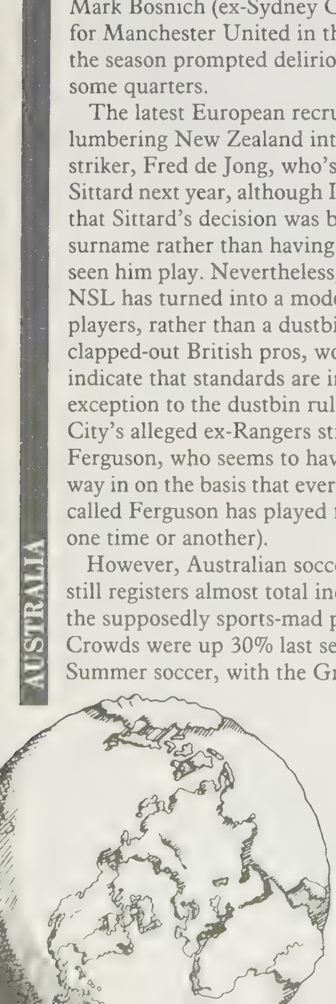
When Melbourne Croatia qualified for last season's (ie 1990) play-offs by finishing third in the league, captain and midfield playmaker Zelko Adzic immediately moved into action. He signed for Dinamo Zagreb and was on a plane out of the country before you could say *"Ustachi"*. The play-offs and Grand Final are the most important matches of the season, but Adzic's untimely departure prompted little more than a shrug of the shoulders from lugubrious Croatia coach Ivan Raznjevic and the soccer press. After all, if you could call your club Croatia, you can hardly complain if the players see Australian soccer as a barely adequate substitute for the real thing.

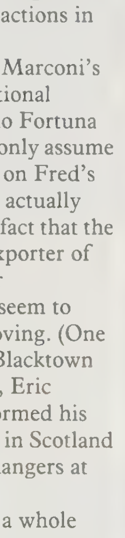
Adzic isn't the only example of the National Soccer League's failure to provide an acceptable stage for Australia's growing number of talented players. Television programmes appear to be contractually bound to mention every half hour or so that Frank Farina (Bruges) was Belgium's leading scorer last season (a feat previously achieved by compatriot Eddie Krncevic). Other exports are sprinkled around Greece and Yugoslavia, with tentative incursions into England as well. One of the most gripping issues of our season was whether or not Alastair Edwards (Sydney Olympic) would get a game with Brighton or Watford, while the appearance of eighteen-year-old Mark Bosnich (ex-Sydney Croatia) in goal for Manchester United in their last game of the season prompted delirious reactions in some quarters.

The latest European recruit is Marconi's lumbering New Zealand international striker, Fred de Jong, who's off to Fortuna Sittard next year, although I can only assume that Sittard's decision was based on Fred's surname rather than having ever actually seen him play. Nevertheless, the fact that the NSL has turned into a modest exporter of players, rather than a dustbin for clapped-out British pros, would seem to indicate that standards are improving. (One exception to the dustbin rule is Blacktown City's alleged ex-Rangers striker, Eric Ferguson, who seems to have wormed his way in on the basis that everyone in Scotland called Ferguson has played for Rangers at one time or another).

However, Australian soccer as a whole still registers almost total indifference with the supposedly sports-mad population. Crowds were up 30% last season, the first of Summer soccer, with the Grand Final

Alan Davids





attracting a whopping 26,352 (the second highest crowd for a club game, ever). That still left the average gate nudging the 3,000 mark, considerably less than the crowds for the top half dozen basketball teams.

The increase might have been more, but it was revealed halfway through the season that most of the clubs in Melbourne had been giving out 'estimated' figures for many games. In one instance, Melbourne's cheeky Maltese outfit, Sunshine George Cross, 'estimated' that the gate for their match with Apia was 1,520, whereas the real figure turned out to be 760. Sharper readers will have noticed how they arrived at the 'estimated' figure....One club who could definitely not be accused of fiddling, however, was Frank Arok's St George, who were attracting small discussion groups rather than crowds for their games at the rear end of the season (282 against South Melbourne Hellas).

"However, Australian soccer as a whole still registers almost total indifference with the supposedly sports-mad population"

Fluctuating crowd figures and fleeing players are not soccer's only problem of course. Ethnic violence flared up again this year with Greeks *v* Croatians in Melbourne and Greeks *v* Macedonians in a particularly nasty spat in Sydney, which received widespread TV exposure. People say that Rangers and Celtic have got a long history, but this one goes back to about 2,000 BC. The issue of ethnic domination of the sport is one which isn't going to go away in the foreseeable future. The ASF, although denying that it wants to turn soccer into a game for 'big boofy blokes' like Rugby League or Aussie Rules, is making renewed attempts to ban national flags, pictures of political leaders, tannoy announcements in foreign languages, people wearing Milan shirts, swarthy men with moustaches and *souvlaki*-sellers from all NSL matches.

Although it's true that the identification of clubs with ethnic groups rather than local areas is a turn-off for some people, the cosmopolitan nature of soccer in Australia is also one of its most attractive features. Take Sydney's Maltese team, Melita Eagles, for example. Promoted from the State League last season, Melita prospered in the NSL thanks to a defence which would have frustrated the *Luftwaffe*. Their strong South American influence took the credit, through coach Raul Blanco and diminutive ex-Uruguayan international, Washington Gonzalez, who strolls around, points, takes free kicks, and loses possession in his own half with the typical assurance of the old pro fallen among hapless part-timers.

Reclining in the sun on the inevitable grassy bank behind the Eagles' goal with a bag of marzipan cakes, being entertained by the exchanges between the languid Latin sweeper, 'Wash', and his hyperactive Scouse goalkeeper, Alex McPherson, is an experience unique to Australian soccer. I can think of worse ways to contemplate the implications of multi-culturalism. Everything has its drawbacks however, and the downside of such fascinating cultural mixtures are the Mediterranean 'folk displays' which often serve as pre-match entertainment. Take it from me, twenty minutes of Croatian clog-dancing is almost enough to make you yearn for brass bands and celebrity penalty shoot-outs.

Multi-culturalism may have arrived on the pitch, but a strong whiff of the 'cultural cringe' still pervades Australian soccer's attitudes towards its supposedly superior European counterpart (well, okay, it is superior actually). The reverence shown to anyone who has ever been so much as a ballboy in a European League reaches its apotheosis on the ABC's live coverage of big English games. Mine host is John Bell, a small, earnest, intensely boring man (perhaps Motson-esque is the easiest description), his guest is invariably John Kosmina (one League game for Arsenal in 1978) and Alan Davidson (three League games for Forest in 1984-85). All wear regulation bright green ABC jackets and bright red ties. Bell's stock introduction to a question goes: *"Well Kozzie (*a futile attempt at informality*), you know David O'Leary well of course..."* or *"so tell us, Alan, what exactly will Cloughie be saying to his players now..."*

There was some consternation at this year's Cup Final Replay when the ever-rebellious Craig Johnston replaced Davidson and insisted on wearing his own stylish grey suit *and an earring*. None of which made his comments to the fawning Bell sound any less crass, even to an audience deprived of its critical faculties by gross sleep deprivation as well as the sheer numbing tediousness of the match.

Moves are apparently afoot to offer the stubbornly ringletted Johnston a senior post in Australian soccer administration. While this might seem like a particularly ill-conceived notion, it's hard to imagine that he would make more of a mess of it than some of the present incumbents. Apart from the familiar failures of organisation and promotion at club and league level (at one match this season the press box took over 50 phone calls asking them when the game was on), there is an almost comical lack of co-ordination between the national league and the state leagues which supposedly feed into it.

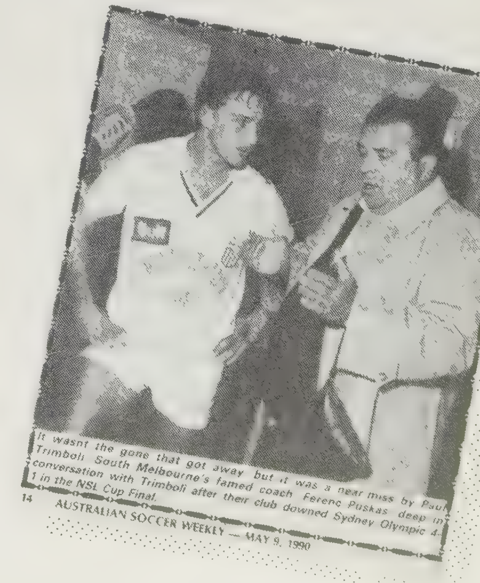
The decision to embrace Summer soccer in the NSL but leave the state leagues in the Winter was a sure recipe for confusion, and so it proved. This year the New South Wales league began after the end of the NSL season, giving the relegated NSW club, Blacktown City, the chance to regain their place in the NSL before the next season starts again in October! Given Blacktown's propensity for yo-yoing between the two leagues, their players might be able to look forward to their next break around 1994.

Australian soccer abounds with such absurdities. Referees, for example, are regularly forced to shuttle between Sydney and Melbourne (about the same distance as London to Vienna) for NSL matches in bizarre attempts to ensure 'neutrality' between teams from different states. Australia's World Cup referee, Richard Lorenc, wasn't required for a single one of the Premiership play-offs or the Grand Final this year. Small wonder, then, if he lives up to the performance of his compatriot, the magnificently tattooed Chris Bambridge, famous for disallowing Spain's 'goal' against Brazil in Mexico.

All hope is not lost, however. The NSL have promised to implement the recommendations of a thorough report into soccer's structure. Its proposals for club mergers, limited franchising and administrative streamlining are largely sound, although details are scarce so far. The same group were partly responsible for revitalising NSW Rugby League in the past few years, most notoriously through the use of videos of Tina Turner in a footy jersey having a bit of rough and tumble with the lads.

It's hard to see soccer coming up with anything quite so dynamic. Trying to shelter from the rain under a TV gantry with 500 other people at Blacktown City's Gabbie 'Stadium' is still a much more common experience than the euphoria of the Grand Final, and makes the prospects of soccer pulling off a similarly effective promotion seem distinctly faint. On the other hand, they surely can't do worse than Croatian clog-dancing.

Mike Ticher


It wasnt the gone that got away but it was a near miss by Paul Trimboli South Melbourne's famed coach Ferenc Puskas deep in conversation with Trimboli after their club downed Sydney Olympic 4-1 in the NSL Cup Final.

14 AUSTRALIAN SOCCER WEEKLY — MAY 9, 1990

It is probably fair to say that the sleepy Wiltshire town of Trowbridge has an unique place in football history. Since soccer was in its infancy and players tripped over their shorts and suffered brain damage heading the ball, a little piece of the town has occupied the stomachs and tastebuds of countless fans from Liverpool to AP Leamington. Yes, Trowbridge is the home of the pork pie. At the windswept Frome Road ground, supporters rarely sniff a goal but their nostrils are frequently tormented by the smell of sizzling pig and charred pastry wafting from the nearby bacon factory. In the tea hut they do little business on the pie front and in the past, on the field they have done even less.

Since the Town took out Beazer Homes League life membership, football has failed to capture the imagination of the local populace. Yet ask any native over thirty and it is a fair bet that they have seen at least one match. That match was way back in 1963 when Trowbridge found themselves in the FA Cup 1st Round proper.

In those days even Third Division League clubs were big news and they did not come any bigger than their opponents, Coventry City, managed by the dashing young Jimmy Hill.

"Yes, Trowbridge is the home of the pork pie."

My friend and I reckoned there were 3,000,000 in the crowd that day, easily the Town's record attendance. The record shows it was actually 6,000 plus — but, then, we were only nine at the time. The atmosphere was electric, a Cup shock inevitable. Pre-match publicity told us so and Jimmy told the media; *"Strange things happen in the Cup"* and *" We take each game as it comes."* We did not know then that Jimmy is a tape loop, and thought he meant it. What a load of crap! Trowbridge Town 1 Coventry City 6.

Four days later, the non-League treadmill turned again and everything was back to normal. In the Western League, the club were rarely out of the frame come the end of the season, a fact reflected in gates of two or three thousand. But in the Southern (now Beazer Homes) things were much tougher, glory scarcer and crowds smaller.

Over the years they may not have produced great players, but many were characters whose names were legendary within a mile of the ground. The talented Archie Thorburn, a great footballer who, strangely for a Scotsman, had a fondness for drink, also had an aversion to training. He often passed his sweating team-mates out on a gruelling road-run, waving from the top of a bus. There was also Kenny Abrahams, whose weekly beer money was amply provided for by his travelling expenses to home games. It took a while, but the club finally twigged that Kenny only lived fifty yards from the ground.

The terraces (well, grassy slopes) have been home to countless weirdos, such as the octogenarian supporter ejected from the ground at half-time on the insistence of the Altrincham manager. For forty five minutes, the 'Robins' supremo had been held captive in the dugout by this ranting old timer, whose tirade of abuse included the claim that he had slept with the manager's mother and could name other members of his regiment who had done likewise. A similarly ancient supporter (this time female) was once threatened with the same fate after attacking the referee with an apple...

Throughout the Sixties and Seventies, Trowbridge had a single, modest aim. To finish 14th every season. But in 1980-81, the club finished a credible third. Next season, we thought, we could be contenders. The club had other ideas. Rightly, they applied for membership of the Alliance League, now the GM Vauxhall Conference. As champions, Alvechurch had priority, followed by runners-up Bedford. But Bedford's tin stadium was too scruffy for the Alliance, Alvechurch sensibly declined the offer, and, flattered to be asked, Trowbridge said yes. A general manager was appointed — just like at a real football club — and a new team boss arrived in the shape of former Leicester City star, Alan Birchenall. We were stunned.

The ground looked glorious, smelling of fresh paint and creosote and 'Shag Corner', the little footpath that led to it, was relieved of its litter. We were definitely going places.

Trowbridge made their debut at Altrincham, then perhaps the best non-League side in the country and came away with a 1-0 victory. Dancing in the streets, however, came a week later at the first home game, when prior to kick-off, Birchenall, drum majorettes, councillors, the boys brigade band and a police Escort (as in van) marched between bemused shoppers, up the long slope to the ground.

Those early days in the top flight were something else. At half-time, 'Birch' would be out on the centre-spot, microphone in hand, communicating to the fans. It was totally inaudible, but you could tell from the mad look in his eyes he was talking big plans.

He opted for experience over youth, a policy that was to blight the club for years after. Instead of looking for new, up-and-coming talent, he called in his old mates. Among those lured to Frome Road were Alan Durban (who lasted a fortnight) and the Charlie Watts of football, George Armstrong. As the club began to struggle, the lure of a safe staff job at his old club Leicester saw Birchenall depart. The club clung on to Alliance status for another two

TRO

TROWBRIDGE TOWN

"At half-time, 'Birch' would be out on the centre-spot, microphone in hand, communicating to the fans. It was totally inaudible, but you could tell from the mad look in his eyes he was talking big plans."

VBRIDGE TOO FAR

Marcus Bray (on floor) *v* Poole Town

seasons, then passed through the Southern Premier quicker than a laxative and found themselves back in Division One. Player and management turnover was phenomenal and finances became desperate. Thank God the grandstand mysteriously burned down at 3 am one morning. We needed that insurance!

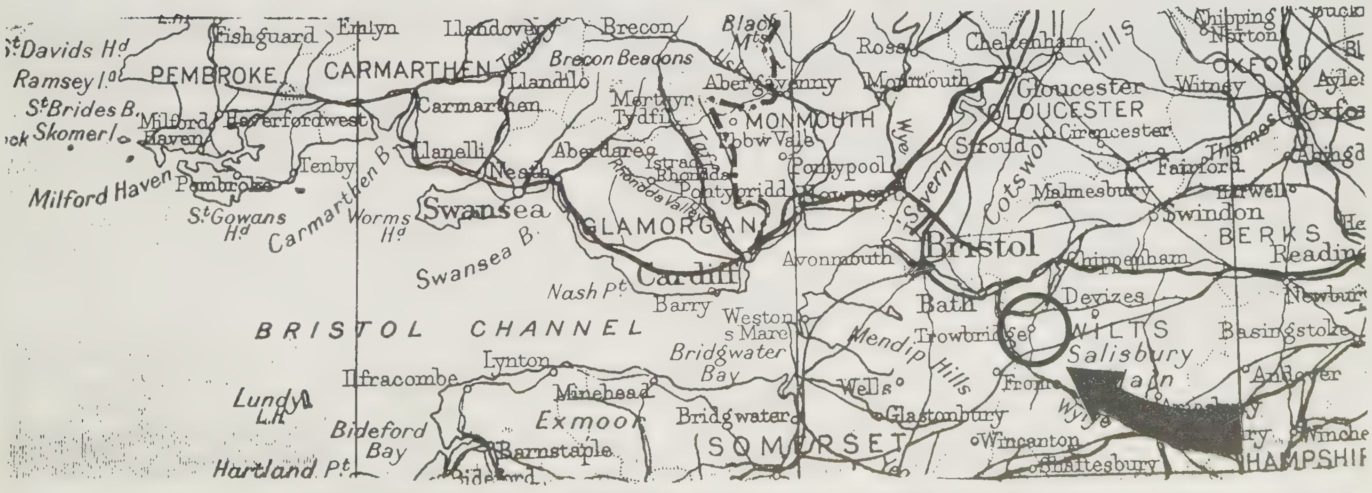
Trowbridge remain in Division One but hope springs eternal. Last season, John Murphy, a respected non-League boss who did great things for Cheltenham Town, moved into the hot seat. By Christmas 1989, looking decidedly Acid House in tie-dye shirts with paisley collar and cuffs (honest!), the team led the League by nine clear points. Come January, however, either someone had been spiking their linament or panic had set in. With a defence that was determined to play in midfield, including the goalkeeper, the club contrived to win only three of their last sixteen games and finished seventh in the table.

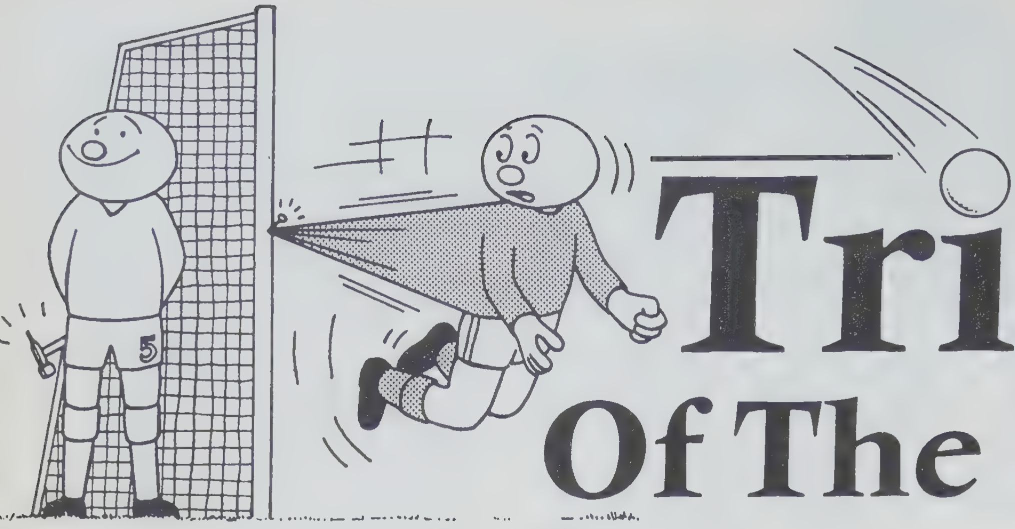
> ***"Thank God the grandstand mysteriously burned down at 3 am one morning. We needed that insurance!"***

By the last home match, the daisies and dandelions stood proud in the goalmouth and, somehow, with nothing to play for, the team played better than ever. Thankfully, the Chairman put it all into perspective. With debts again around the £100,000 mark, a new 'stadium' likely within the next century and no budget for players' wages, the club are in limbo. Like so many of the smaller clubs, Trowbridge Town limp from crisis to crisis, yet somehow go on, determined to keep the game alive and struggling in this footballing backwater.

Now, with thoughts of last season's early glories still fresh in their minds, the fans once again believe that next season, we could be contenders....

Merv Grist





Tricks Of The Trade

Everyone cheats. An office worker might ring the 'Luscious Liz Goes All The Way' phone line from work. The factory worker will develop urinary disorder to escape the drudgery of the shop floor. We all do it, but we do it discreetly and sneakily — footballers do it blatantly, often in front of thousands of people.

Of course, we do not go in for ludicrous excessive cheating like the damn foreigners. Matches are (generally) not fixed, referees are not threatened with decapitation if they award a late penalty and visiting teams are not presented with salmonella sandwiches two hours before the kick-off.

Here in Britain, our lads (everyone earning a living from football is always a 'lad', even if he is over eighty) have developed their own form of cheating. It is quite subtle and almost invisible because we have grown so accustomed to it. We shouldn't have to put up with it because it has the cumulative effect of ruining games.

Like the average football fan, the various footballing authorities have trouble spotting the devious blighters, so here's an official Top Ten of the favourites from the players' Saturday afternoon box of tricks. Some are not technically outlawed, but are still boring, petty and just not cricket.

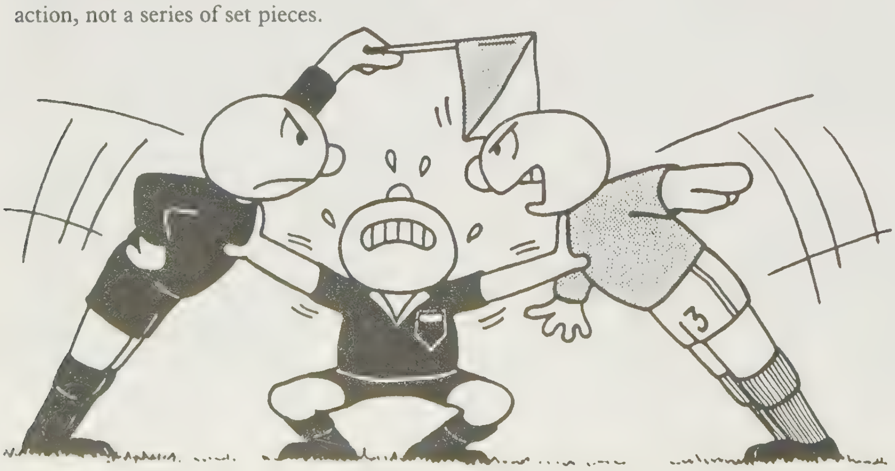
1. Standing over the ball when a free kick is awarded to the opponents — it would seem every player in the Football League does this one, and they rarely get spoken to by the referee, never mind booked. It cuts out the quick free kick, slowing games to a torpid pace. It seems that some players, especially midfielders, are actually instructed to stand over the ball. We want to see fast flowing action, not a series of set pieces.

2. Goalkeepers feed the ball to a defender on the edge of the penalty box. He holds on to it until a forward moves in and then passes it back to the keeper — this one seems to have become more popular in recent seasons. Its one function is to waste time. There is nothing more enjoyable than seeing a team that has previously employed such a dastardly tactic, desperate for more time when they concede a goal.

3. Appealing for every decision — the defender is three yards in front of everyone, he whacks it into the pie-lady's hut and then sticks up his hand. *"Our ball, ref,"* he shouts, followed by the inevitable shake of the head, and possibly a prolonged remonstration to the linesman who has mortally sinned by merely indicating the obvious.

4. The defensive wall not retreating ten yards at free kicks — an old favourite. We will not see glorious goals and 'banana shots' when the wall is near enough to unlace the ball. There's always one poor blighter unfortunate enough to have the job of charging headlong at the speeding ball while all the rest shield their wedding tackle from six yards away. The players in the walls are never ten yards back and they compound matters by inching their way forward like a bunch of school kids sneaking out of the playground.

5. Kicking the ball away — there are many variations of this one. Some players smack it into the crowd, others trap the ball yards away from the free kick and leave it, and others go on a merry dribble in the wrong direction.



6. Springing the offside trap from a goal kick — defenders compress the play by ambling ten yards from the halfway line and then racing forward as one to catch the attackers offside directly from a goal kick. A thrilling, exciting move.

7. Shirt-tugging — especially popular at corner kicks. Strangely, many players assume they become invisible in a crowded penalty box and start pulling and dragging each other around. They know the referee is unlikely to award a penalty, and more importantly they know a forward is going to find it difficult to score when he is unable to move.

8. Goalkeepers with expert right hooks — it's an old cliche about forwards having to come within just three yards of a 'keeper before the referee awards a free kick. These days the glove is on the other foot and many daring keepers put their soft hands violently into places where the other players put only their hard faces. Increasingly forwards are being left pole-axed by a wayward fist or a good kick in the stomach.

9. Arguing — a very popular pastime. Players argue with each other (even with their own team mates), the referee, the crowd, photographers, policemen, corner flags, centre spot, goal posts.

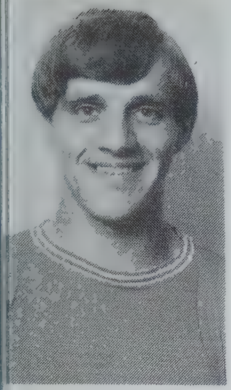
10. Pretending to be dead — it might be a new, exciting medical condition that causes a person to lie face down, motionless, for up to four minutes after a solid tap on the shin. Perhaps they are knocked unconscious because they keep their brain tucked down their socks, taped to their legs. The condition is even more fascinating because of the dramatic recovery provoked by water and cloth.

That's ten of the best. They're coming to a stadium near you soon, but you can help stamp them out. Even if it's your team who are perpetrating this behaviour, give them a severe booing and write letters to your local paper.

Mark Hodkinson

"I'm not a number I'm FREEMAN"

Neil Reynolds



It was 9th August 1969, the opening day of the season. Over 22,000 packed into the Dell, eager with anticipation for the meeting of Southampton, who had finished the previous season in sixth place, and West Bromwich Albion. Albion had won the Cup in 1968 and may have done so again had not their semi-final been played at Hillsborough, where they are cursed.

Membership of the exclusive club of those privileged to have seen Albion win at Sheffield Wednesday diminishes every year, and in that semi John Osborne contrived to dive under Allan Clarke's last minute 'shot', which bounced four times before trickling over the line for the only goal of the game. In the close season, the Albion manager Alan Ashman tried to build a championship team and bought Colin Suggett from Sunderland for £100,000, a large sum in those days. Danny Hegan and Allan Glover also arrived in big money transfers. King Jeff Astle was suspended so there was a fourth debutant at Southampton — Peter Freeman, who lined up in the No. 11 shirt. Freeman arrived at the Hawthorns via Alvechurch and Stourbridge.

In the opening minutes he got the ball in space and hugged the left touchline as he moved goalwards. At the heart of the Saints defence was John McGrath, a Neanderthal out of his time. Assassins of the late Sixties and early Seventies tended to do their dirty work off the ball and on the blind side of referees. Subtle McGrath was not. Shirt sleeves rolled up and shorts rolled up still further, exposing all of his hefty thighs and much of his buttocks, McGrath epitomised the old-style hard man. Early intimidation was the norm, especially towards an untried youngster. Faced with impending assault by a runaway train many wingers would have tried to make it to the by-line, more would get their cross in early, and some would even tap the ball into touch themselves to avoid the inevitable bruising. Instead Freeman slowed down, almost to a standstill, and braced himself for the collision. The look of amazement on McGrath's face as he bounced off Freeman and landed with a thud on his ear was a sight to behold.

Peter Freeman was not your usual fast but frail winger; indeed, he was not a winger at all but a centre forward, played out of position on this occasion. He was over six feet tall, and weighed nearly fourteen stone. His chest was so huge it would have made Desperate Dan jealous, and for reasons unknown he was called Percy — or simply Perce. As a part-timer Percy used to drive lorries for a living, and no-one ever dared try to hijack *his* load.

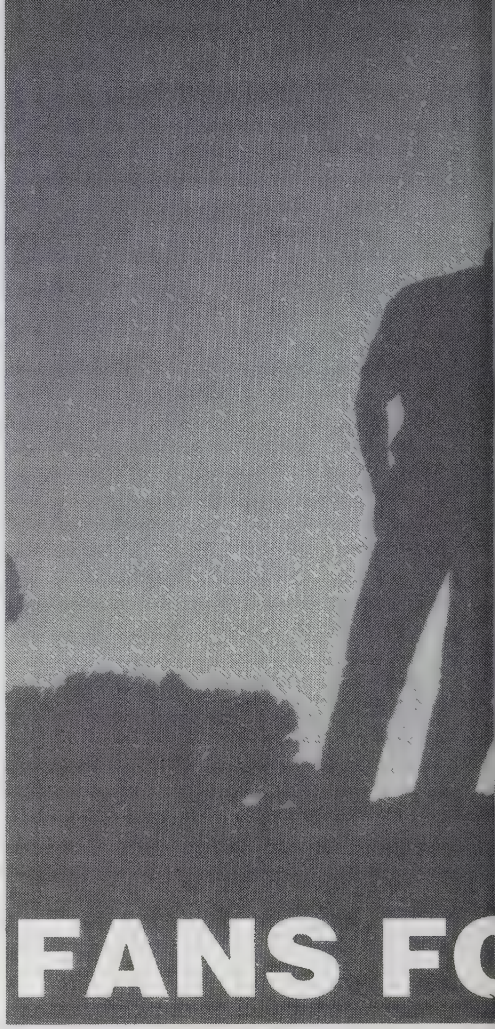
In front of me in the crowd stood a little old lady, the image of Whistler's Mother. Whether she was McGrath's mother I cannot say, but she seemed to take personally the deflation of McGrath's ego. She screamed at the Elephant Man to *"crunch"* Perce and *"put him in the crowd,"* whereupon Big Bad John had another go a few minutes later. This time Percy did not merely slow down, he stopped, stood over the ball and invited all-comers to charge him off it. Nobody managed to do it. Raging Bull McGrath was flattened again but was rather generously awarded a free kick.

In the second half Percy laid on the opening goal with a header to Suggett, and later jumped for a corner, bundling McGrath into his keeper, Gerry Gurr. Both landed in a heap and Suggett gratefully whipped in the second goal to seal the game.

When Jeff Astle was available again Percy lost his place and astonishingly only played one more first team game for Albion — a home defeat against Arsenal. Albion tried to coach him into becoming a footballer, but it was a futile and unnecessary exercise.

Percy's main attribute was his strength, as he so superbly demonstrated in a Central League game. He picked up the ball in the centre circle and hared for goal, whereupon a defender leapt on his back. Perce kept going like a horse and shrugged off his unwanted jockey after about ten yards, then another opponent flung himself at Percy's legs with a rugby tackle. Percy didn't even break stride but simply trampled all over him and let fly with a thunderous shot from the edge of the box. It hit the bar so hard that it flew back over Percy's head and reached the halfway line with a single bounce. Exaggeration? Possibly, after all it was twenty years ago; perhaps the ball only just reached the centre circle. Certainly those lucky enough to be present at the Hawthorns that day still hold the memory dear, and surely it could not have been a mass optical illusion.

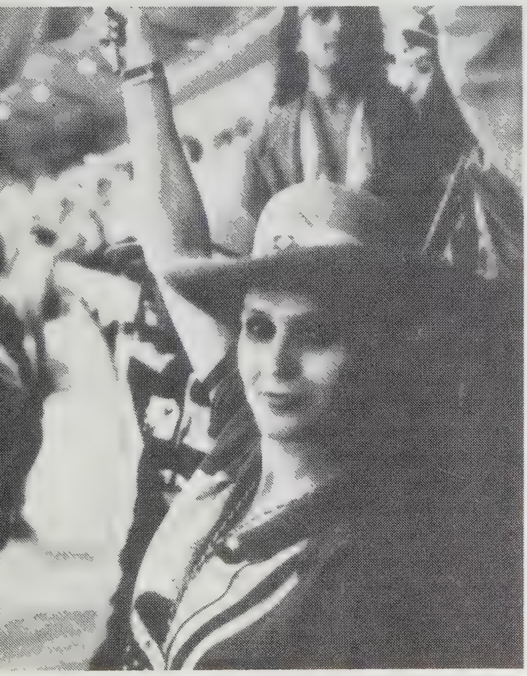
Percy may not have had the class demanded by the Albion team of that era, but he went on to hit 60 goals in 152 matches for Lincoln and helped them to the Fourth Division championship. A few years later another prodigy burst on to the Hawthorns scene. He was big, strong, just as meteoric but longer lasting — Cyrille Regis. Oh how Albion need a modern version of either.



Did you go the World Cup? No, neither did we. Dave Hill did though, and met a few other people....

1. Argentina

Maradona's pectorals are the secret here. The *generalissimo*'s barrel chest, jutting in constant anticipation of someone putting a gong on it, set the tone. Such posing, *compadres*! As their team filed out at the Giuseppe Meazza Stadium in Milan, Diego's disciples took turns at securing that definitive scrapbook snapshot: they strode over to the plastic parapet that stops people falling into the moat; they contrived a physical posture in the style of a military commander surveying a victory parade, one arm thrown casually along the parapet top, the opposite hand rested heroically on hip. Next...hold in that gut, and swell that valorous breast! The vertical stripes of their replica team shirts instantly doubled in width. An instamatic clicked. Finally, each prideful patriot would stagger back to his seat, exhausted by the effort.



2. Belgium

It was drizzling in Verona as the Belgians marched towards their opening fixture with South Korea. Nearly all of them were male, some very fat, and a couple, in full public view, stood piddling against a wall. Why, it was almost like being at home. In other ways, though, they are quite different to the English. For a start most of them speak at least three languages including Flemish, an obscure alien tongue which some of Our Lads would only be likely to master if it was spelt with 'Ph' at the beginning and had a 'g' somewhere in the middle. What marks the Belgians out for special distinction, however, is their weakness for the famous 'clapping hat', whereby a perfectly innocent piece of multi-coloured headgear has a pair of fabric 'hands' forcibly stitched to its front which then 'applaud' silently with every movement of the wearer's head. What has our great game come to when a handful of lunatics can ruin the reputation of ordinary, decent football supporters everywhere?

3. Brazil

Why is that all Brazilian women looked like contestants from Miss Rio de Janeiro? Were they genuine football supporters (*sic*) or had they simply been hired for the occasion by those fat, white international businessmen (some with suspiciously authentic American accents) who seemed to comprise about half the Brazilian fans? With a better command of Portuguese I might have tried to find out, but one linguistic *faux pas* could have cost my front teeth — those tubs of lard with their gold American Express cards probably travel with minders. Also, there was a skinny, spaced-out loony tune guy in lemon coloured flares and a head-band, with eyes like Toto Schillaci. Acid samba, anyone?

4. Scotland

Such is the high reputation of the Tartan Army these days, all kinds of peripheral figures are claiming their right to enlist: expatriate South African liberal journalists and at least one Australian sociologist of my acquaintance are suddenly boasting of great aunts from Falkirk and getting measured up for kilts. Why, you can't even depend on a Scottish football fan to hate the 'fuckin' English' anymore. One I spoke to, waving a 'no alla violenza' banner, turned out to be a copper with the Met! Others, though, exploited the TV exposure to advance the noble, anti-Westminster cause of stuffing the Poll Tax. Made you proud to be British.

5. Colombia

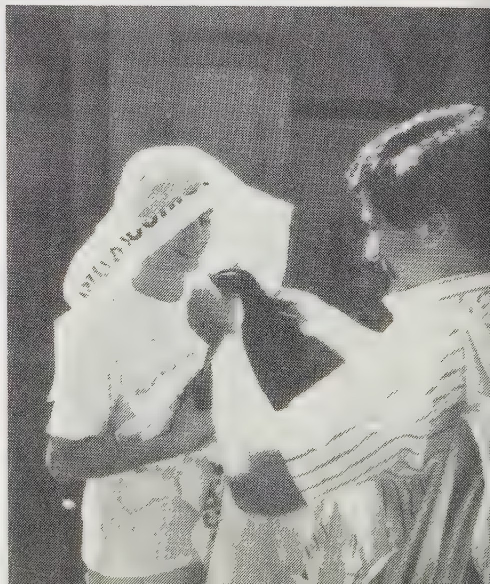
An affable bunch of *al fresco* groovers, their nation's reputation as a drug trade hot spot left them potentially vulnerable to taunts from opposing fans. Where Londoners goad Scousers by waving wads of readies, would the Top Boys of the United Arab Emirates taunt the Colombians by rolling thousand lire notes into tight little tubes, sticking them up their noses and sniffing in derisive unison? No, of course they wouldn't. And anyway, it was far too hot for snow in Bologna. (Cocaine joke — geddit?)

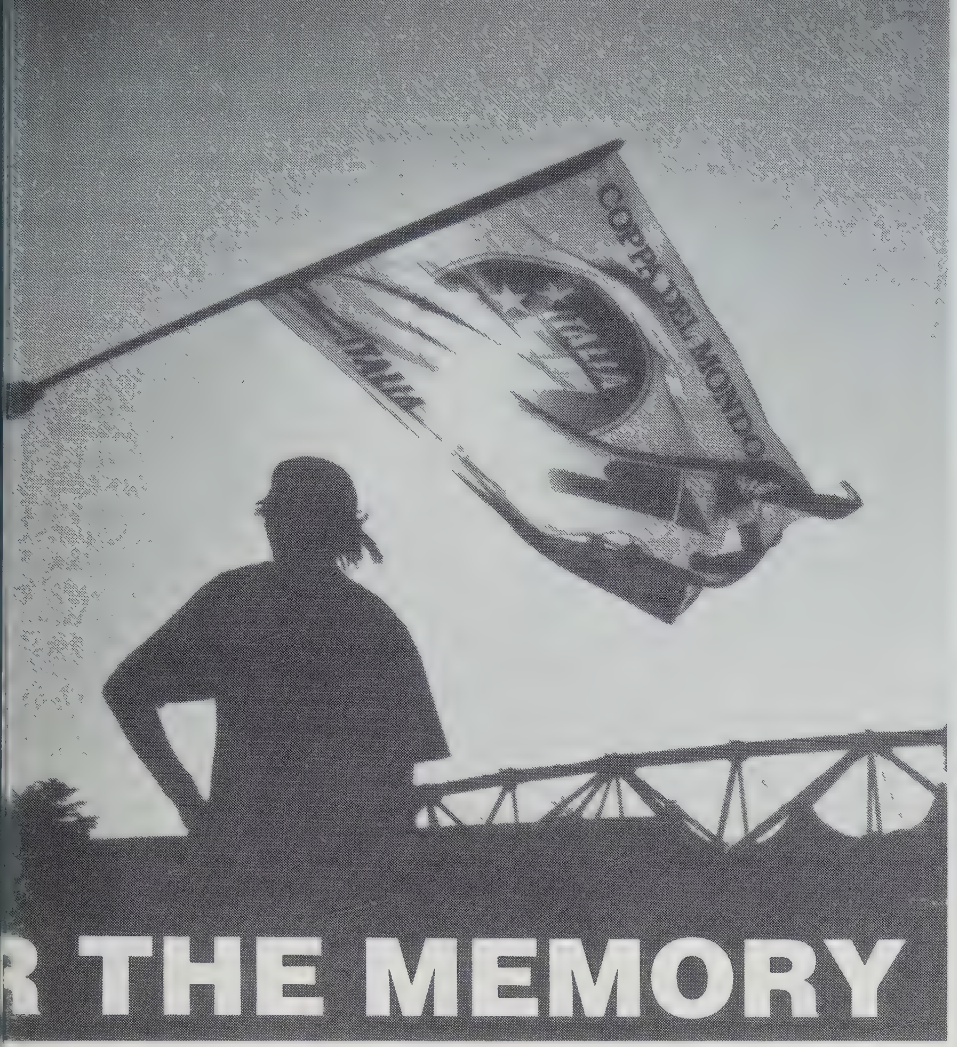
6. South Korea

Delightful people, most of them furnished with paper flags and vermillion sun-visors by well organised emigre associations. Hence loads of women, packs of little children scurrying about and much synchronised clattering of tiny cymbals. There were a few bemused package tourists too, taking in a match along with the opera and the postcards of the Pope and keeping off the drizzle with golfing brollies and pale blue pac-a-macs produced at a second's notice from a cardboard box. Well organised, these Orientals, even if they 'ave got funny names. What do you fink, Emlyn?

7. Sweden

Very big on post-punk haircuts and body paints. At the Brazil game there was a little knot of barmy Nords in among the South Americans with faces and mini-beehive coiffs alike, and decked out in the blue-with-yellow-cross design of their national flag. Every time the Swedes broke out of their own half, this little crew of crackpots started bobbing up and down like extra-terrestrials crashing a Gary Numan





R THE MEMORY

gig. Demented, certainly — but not so much that they weren't prepared to samba in the car park afterwards.

8. Costa Rica
Seeing a crowd forming up so smartly behind a red banner prior to the Scotland game in Genoa, I rushed over, ready to be impressed. However, they turned out not to be Costa Ricans at all, but a group of trade unionists protesting against their employer, Marconi. In fact there was barely a whiff of the Costa Rican contingent till the Goal We Dare Not Mention, when at least three people stood up and cheered. *"Where is fuckin' Costa Rica anyway?"* bemoaned a Tartan foot-soldier after the game. Answer: two points ahead of you, old son.

9. Holland
Judged by appearances, there is no archetypal Dutch thug, just a desultory collection of oddballs with an attitude problem. A little crew of malcontents gathered through the night at Cagliari airport, cornered at intervals by camera crews anticipating the great Anglo-Dutch bust up that never was. The most impressive Hollander heavy was a scrawny, hollow-cheeked youth with a haircut I would place as early Suedehead (UK style) and a jaw held scrupulously slack so that his mouth hung sullenly open at all times. But the point with the Dutch in general is that their bad lads are swamped by the honking, hat-wearing, orange-clad hordes who are in danger of giving continental street theatre a good name.

10. United Arab Emirates
The arrival of their dignitaries in Bologna was surreal, all mirror shades and starched white robes, pouring off coaches and striding across the asphalt, match tickets flapping in their hands. The rank and file, meanwhile, sustained a transcendental mantra throughout a sweltering opening fixture against Colombia, pausing only to look askance at those foolish Western neutrals wearing replica Arab head-dress as supplied by a publicity-seeking Italian TV star outside the ground. Your correspondent, alas, was among those who took this undignified course, which only goes to prove that all Englishmen turn into wallies when exposed to direct sunlight.

11. United States of America
To patronise soccer in the USA is to engage in a form of suburban rebellion. One US supporter revealed that sporting a pair of black Adidas trainers — which look like football boots without the studs — betrays an unAmerican sartorial attitude. There was a winning gallows humour about the American fans, best exemplified after that moment in Rome when Walter Zenga only saved the nation's blushes with the help of a well positioned buttock. Swamped amid a sea of quaking Italians, a rank of Yanks conducted their very own, star-spangled, six-man Mexican wave. Lovely.

12. Cameroon
Mostly, the 'Roon's fans comprised student expatriates from France, street traders doing a line in flags and tout tickets and dance troupers complete with talking drums. All very friendly and nice, though — as on the park — not without a mean streak. Following the defeat of Argentina, one Cameroonian approached a couple of crestfallen Maradona freaks wielding a poster of their battered hero. He stopped, spun around, thrust his buttocks in the mourners' direction and metaphorically reduced poor Diego's visage to the ignominy of an Andrex substitute. Not very diplomatic, though the symbolism could not be flawed.

13. Italy
Written by one who returned from the World Cup wanting to become Italian as quickly as possible, this is scarcely an objective assessment. But what an exhilarating sense of *ritual*. Yes, of course, their soccer moguls are egomaniacs, yes of course, it's all done through 'friends', and yes, of course, too many of their fans were spoiling for a scrap. Even so, the Italians' language of soccer appreciation emphasises *beauty* above all else. I defy you to name a nation that celebrates its football in a more life-affirming way, despite those wonderful, crazy city-centre victory motorcades being a risk to health and sanity.

14. England
Suggestions for further improvement: a) Deport Colin Moynihan, preferably to the planet Pluto. b) Replace the Football Association with the Football Supporters' Association. c) Insert a clause in Graham Taylor's contract forbidding him ever to invoke the 'English fighting spirit'. d) Round up every English football reporter who used the word 'jungle' in describing Cameroon and feed them to the crocodiles at London Zoo. e) Give Paul Gascoigne a knighthood as a reminder to all England that football is so much better as a beautiful game than as a war game. Get all that lot going and some of us might even be prepared to start referring to England as 'we'...

Dave Hill

Great Goals Scored By Tubby Left Backs

● No.1 Owen Simpson (Southend v Northampton, 25th September 1970)

When I was a teenager in Southend, entertainment meant spending every other Friday night freezing on the North Bank at Roots Hall. Southend had celebrated my arrival in town by getting relegated to the Fourth Division, and after three near misses in the promotion stakes, they had scraped into 17th place in 1969-70. The new season started with the same combination of passion and incompetence that had marked the last one, and many of us were convinced that we were watching our last season of League football at Roots Hall. The first three home matches confirmed this view, with draws against Southport and Darlington and a defeat by Bournemouth, but Southend broke their duck with two away wins in three days against Lincoln and Hartlepool, and the end of the week brought a home game with Northampton, top of the table with six wins and two draws in eight games. (Yes, we are talking about the same Northampton Town. Remember this is a history lesson.)

Southend made two changes from the winning team, Simpson and Lumsden returning to replace McMahon and Lindsey. Mixed feelings here; McMahon was on loan from Preston, and looked a class above the rest — but then so did I — while Keith Lindsey was a favourite with the crowd. Usually right back, he overlapped at great pace and had a fierce shot. You always felt a little thrill when he got the ball on his right foot. If he got it on his left foot, you ducked. The stand behind the goal was no place to be in those circumstances.

But we could accept the loss of Lindsey if it meant Simpson's return. I think it was my best friend, Anthony Cherry, who first christened him 'The Flying Pig'; medium-sized, but portly, Owen Simpson was not athletic, but he was a trier. He passed his Friday evenings in sixty-yard sprints down the left wing, screaming for the pass that rarely came, largely because his team mates knew better. By the time the ball arrived, poor Owen was too clapped out from the sprint to hoof it across, and his attempts were costing the club a fortune in corner flags. Nevertheless, he kept going, wearing out a lane of grass on each side as he rumbled up and down the touchline like a runaway garden roller.

As the game began, old men in mufflers debated the coincidence that Southend's heaviest ever defeat was an 11-1 loss to....Northampton Town. Could we be in for a record-breaking night?

I recall the first half as a pretty turgid affair, goalless and likely to remain so until the misery ended at ten past nine and we could all go home. Just after the hour came the little piece of magic we all enjoyed so much.

How Southend got the ball is a mystery to me. Northampton were fiddling about with some pretty-pretty stuff on the edge of Southend's area, ignoring the direct advice of several of their supporters who probably thought, as we did, that they should have been thirteen up by this stage. Suddenly the ball looped high towards the wing, and Simpson, out of position, saw his chance. It was the work of a moment to let the ball bounce off his belly in a generally forward direction, and he was away. Ignoring all team mates' pleas to give it to someone who could do something useful with it, he drove on and on, Northampton defenders scurrying back behind him. Anyone else would have cut inside towards the wide open spaces, but Simpson was a left back, and left backs knew their place, so he hugged the touchline, at least until a colleague persuaded him to edge inward in case he ran the ball out. Without prior warning he chipped it towards the centre where Billy Best lurked. Best was a good striker, but he was heavily marked and the only safe thing to do was to give it straight back. The pass was hardly precise, though the onrushing Flying Pig was beginning to weave with exhaustion, which might account for it. The ball sat up at hip height, and Simpson, now on his last legs, decided if he didn't shoot straight away he might never get the chance again.

We groaned.

Instinctively we looked behind us, wondering whose car had borne the brunt of it. When we looked back, the Northampton goalie was ruefully rolling the ball out of the net whilst good old Owen, on his knees, had his arms so high we thought he had a private deal going with Right Guard. His stunned team mates surrounded him, tousled his hair, gave him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, and defended grimly for twenty-eight minutes to win 1-0.

Owen lost his place in the team after a thumping at Newport, and in March he was transferred on a free to Darlington. They must have heard about 'The Goal', because in his first game for them, away to Northampton, they gave him the No. 9 jersey. It didn't work. At the end of the season he moved on to Grimsby: Southend finished Northampton's season by doing the double over them.

> ***"..medium-sized, but portly, Owen Simpson was not athletic, but he was a trier."***

Whatever Owen is doing now, I wonder if he ever thinks of his last League goal. Everytime I dream of it, he is just a little faster, a shade trimmer, a touch more lethal. When I am a Grandad, I shall sit the youngsters on my knee and tell them how he dribbled round fourteen players and shot home from eighty-five yards. But the truth is strange enough.

Graham Brack

couch 22

In the November 1989 issue of *World Soccer* Brian Glanville stated, *"Psychology is seventy-five percent of football, at least."* Many people might dismiss this assertion as the demented ravings of a silly old coot. Not me. It struck me as being all too horribly true. After years of watching football I had come to the conclusion, way back in the 1980s, that the only way to improve my team's performance was to subject the players to a lengthy course of psycho-analysis.

Let's look at an example: a striker, for the sake of argument let's call him Peter Davenport, receives the ball on the edge of the six-yard box. The goal gapes before him. Peter looks up at it, then blasts his shot past the post. Why does he do this? Less enlightened souls than myself would suggest that it is because he is crap, or the result of short-sightedness stemming from an unnatural fondness for his own genitals. I, on the other hand, see it as being caused by a subliminal fear. As Peter turns to face the goal something dark and threatening stirs within his psyche. The goal seems to him, in that split second, to be transformed into a gigantic and savage *vagina dentata*. Terrified by the prospect of castration, Peter, metaphorically and physically, shoots wide. Plausible I'm sure you'll agree.

As my example clearly indicates, a basic knowledge of the subconscious mind can lead to a more sympathetic understanding of football and the footballer. Many fans sneer at Man United's constant buying of players, or are envious of Liverpool's bulging trophy cabinet. But we can only feel when we learn that this hoarding, of stars and cups, is the result of severe anal retentiveness brought on by poor potty training at the hands of uncaring parents.

"The goal gapes before him. Peter looks up at it, then blasts his shot past the post. Why does he do this?"

Now let's apply our psychological method to another of the enigmas of the modern game, the amount of protection referees give to goalkeepers. Looking about the football stadium we see that it is littered with the kind of symbols which are the very bread and salami of Freudian dream analysis. The centre circle is a breast, the opposition centre back a phallus, the broken clock on the grandstand a fear of impotence. By far the most obvious and powerful symbol is the penalty area which clearly represents the womb. We must bear this in mind when looking at a typical incident. The goalkeeper rises to collect a cross. While doing so he knees one attacker in the groin and knocks another one unconscious with a right uppercut. As he catches the ball he trips over his own feet and falls down. The referee awards him a free kick. Clearly there is no 'rational' explanation for the ref's decision. If we are to gain any understanding of the matter we must, instead, examine the psychodrama being played out in the man in black's subconscious as he watches the incident.

Already aware that he is in the womb/penalty area, the referee sees the 'keeper fall and curl around the ball in a foetal position. At this moment, in the ref's mind, the goalkeeper is transformed. He is no longer an aggressive, loud-mouthed hooligan, with a ludicrous bubble perm and ridiculous jersey, but the figure of an unborn child, vulnerable and afraid. The sight of the foetus/goalkeeper arouses in the referee a deep-rooted protective instinct. He blows for a foul. Quite why a referee is so keen to protect the unborn is not yet fully understood. My view is that his reaction is a form of over-compensation stemming from his own pre-natal trauma. Possibly he was an unplanned pregnancy. Perhaps, as others have suggested, he was illegitimate.

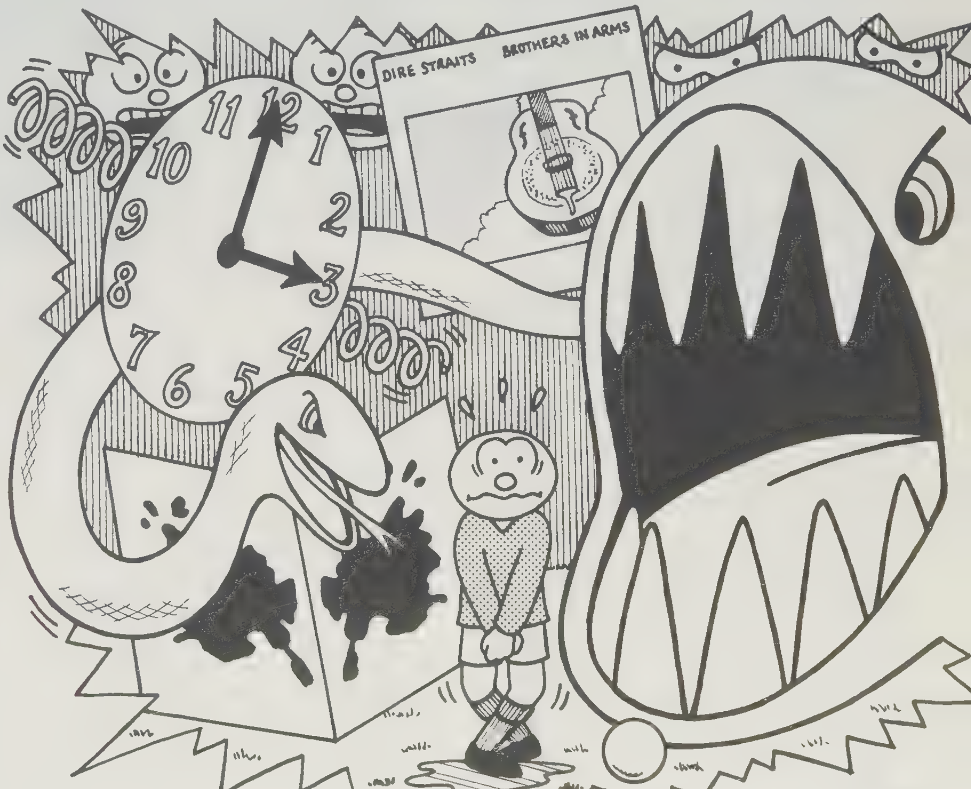
Despite the championing of psychology by the likes of Brian Glanville, Trevor Brooking and myself, the men who run the game seem reluctant to admit that it has its part to play. The request from a leading expert on the soccer subconscious (me) to visit the dressing room of a top Second Division team before an important League match to ascertain whether the left back had ever nursed a sneaky desire to murder his dad, then leap into bed with his mother, was turned down out of hand. The team lost 2-0. *"Those of us who live on the frontiers of science are exiled there by the ignorance of others"*, as Willie Johnston once remarked.

One way of overcoming the barrier of establishment paranoia is to analyse the players' answers to the *Shoot!* questionnaire. A winger who says his pet hate is snakes is clearly repressing bisexual desires, whilst a midfield dynamo who names Dire Straits as his favourite group is obviously in need of a lobotomy. Other methods of establishing a player's mental state, such as chanting *"Brian, Brian did your mother want a girl?"* or holding up giant ink-blot tests, are likely to meet with little response (though on one occasion I was expelled by a policeman who felt that the Rorschach card I was holding up showed *"a proper dickhead"*. Evidently a degree of penis envy there.)

"The sight of the foetus/goalkeeper arouses in the referee a deep-rooted protective instinct."

As I'm sure has become clear during this brief, but rather brilliant, article, psychology has a major part to play in football. Surely it's about time the FA acknowledged this fact by appointing Dr Anthony Clare as England manager and giving Clare Rayner Don Howe's role as the voice of good, old fashioned common sense?

Harry Pearson



Mr Blue

On 30th August 1989, Coventry City went a point clear at the top of Football League Division One. Nothing remarkable in that you might say, Liverpool do it with migraine-inducing monotony. But this monumental journey, from the back room of the alas defunct 'White Lion' to the top of one of Europe's strongest leagues, took 105 years. Will Maidstone take so long? Will Colne Dynamoes? Unlikely.

No wonder Ladbrokes immediately halved City's odds for the Championship. No wonder Northampton Town treated Snozz's 'Young Liverpool' with such reverence, before they realised just how easily they could be dumped out of the Cup. No wonder sales of scrapbooks in the city centre doubled overnight.

For enigmatic Coventry City had become an institution in Division One. Never relegated (though God knows they've tried hard enough in the past), and the only football team to feature in a *Monty Python* sketch. If music hall jokes still existed, Coventry would be the butt of them. Reasonable at home, but suicidally benevolent away. The sort of club where home fans flick eagerly through the Visitor's Pen-Pictures in the programme, sniggering. A retirement home for lower division defenders, or a good touch if you're new to management and you need to unload a veteran winger, or a midfield dynamo with no hair and a tin leg. But Championship material? Hardly.

Yet there was a time when the Dave Clark Five thundered over *Radio Sky Blue* at each home game, and thousands of rattles were twirled ecstatically to each percussive chorus of 'Glad All Over.' When the adrenaline flowed, when Vitalis flowed instead of mousse, and when there were several current internationals in the side, instead of the U-21 Hebridean cap which seems to be the going rate.

The 1960s were the formative years, when the bearded guru Jimmy Hill led the club from obscurity to national fame. JH's tenure began in 1961. We have King's Lynn to thank for it. City were adept at losing Cup ties to non-league opposition even then. Billy Frith was sacked after a 1-2 debacle at home.

Hill phased out the hideously inappropriate nickname of 'The Bantams'. Shouting *"Up The Bantams!"* used to be a cry of encouragement at Highfield Road. Today, quite rightly, it would be taken only as a declaration of intended bestiality. Words cannot adequately describe my despondency as a child when I discovered that some teams were nicknamed after big cats or masked marauders, whilst my heroes were likened to a bunch of demented cockerels. Must be a bit like being called 'The Toffees'.

'Sky Blues' was much nicer. It went with the new all sky blue strip; an early move to (successfully) institute a corporate image. It suggested Utopian optimism; reaching for the stars, rather than strutting round a farmyard looking for a scrap, and hoping Christmas was just a nasty rumour put about by the sheepdogs.

Hill's first signing was Elton John's uncle, Roy Dwight, who came on a free transfer from mighty Gravesend. Cynics detected a certain depressing familiarity about this transaction, the club being only recently out of Division Four. Hill's third capture was a gangling, wacky full back called John Sillett. Things were looking up.

1962-63 was the first full season for the 'Sky Blues'. They reached the Quarter Finals of the FA Cup and just missed promotion. Forget poultry, mateys, this was it.

The following season, they finished champions. It has to be identified as the season when the club finally awoke. For it was the manner in which they did it, on and off the field, which drew admiration.

'The King', George Hudson, worshipped by the fans, hair slicked back and with a body swerve to match Elvis, had netted 21 goals by Christmas. Alec Stock described the City side which mauled his QPR team 6-3 in London, as the finest Third Division team he had ever seen. Poor Shrewsbury felt the full venom of it all at Highfield Road, as they were swept aside 8-1. 36,901 acclaimed The King's final goal in Division Three on the last day of the season.

And by 1967, Hill had guided them into

"Hill's third capture was a gangling, wacky full back called John Sillett. Things were looking up."

Sky

the elite. A gate of 51,455 saw the home game which determined the championship (where are they now?).

Maybe some were actually pulled in by Hill's antics as much as the football. He wooed the public with a series of unashamedly gross stunts, but also introduced genuine radical reform. The programme was revamped to such an extent, it won awards. It was one of the first to use colour, and to go big format. We saw the first close-circuit TV relays transmitted from away games. The first electronic scoreboard of its kind. 'The Sky Blue Express', with headboard and a disco in the coaches, took fans to away games. We had *Sky Blue Radio* rather than a pre-war tannoy, and as the club grew, the old ground disappeared, and a new stadium emerged.

Most importantly of all, we were given the 'Sky Blue Song'. We love it, though I appreciate it makes the rest of you cringe. Personally, I want to stick two fingers down my throat whenever I hear 'You'll Never Walk Alone', but there we are.

Football anthropologists will have to include 'The Sky Blue Song' in any future anthologies alongside, 'I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles', or 'We Are Millwall/No-One Likes Us.' Nobody has ever tried to copy it, and its nuisance value is inestimable. It's certainly a far better use of 'The Eton Boating Song' than the original. After the 1987 Cup Final, I couldn't listen to it at all for at least a week without sobbing emotionally.

Jimmy Hill resigned two days before the start of Coventry's first season in The Great Adventure. Is that good timing or what? Try to imagine Moses coming back down the mountain with a tablet of stone under one arm, and a copy of *Playboy* under the other, and you get the general picture. He returned to meddle as Managing Director in April 1975, and seemed surprised that the fans despised him. His second disastrous reign saw the sales of Dennis Mortimer, Ian Wallace, Tommy Hutchison (still playing), Bobby Macdonald (still playing), Garry Thompson (still playing) and Andy Blair. His reward for this was elevation to Chairman, until mercifully, in 1983, he resigned. During this stint, gates had slumped to the 8,000 mark, the club had lost £700,000 in useless American investments, built a leisure centre which they've since had to sell off, as only rich executives can afford to use it, and built an all-seater stadium which was a damn sight more dangerous than one with open terraces. Brilliant. The man has obviously lost his mind (ask Fulham).

Yet, if anything swung during the sixties, more pendulously than George Curtis's jockstrap, it was Coventry City. One of the ten best supported clubs in the League by the end of the decade, and always in the media eye. Covetousness was inevitable.

None of football's Establishment like it when upstarts emerge to challenge the status quo. Look at the vilification poor old Wimbledon got, merely for creating a miracle. And let's face it, nobody likes a smartarse. Retribution for winning everything, inventing everything, and introducing Jimmy Hill to television, has been wreaked on Coventry since those balmy days.

Only Geoffrey Green of *The Times* had a soft spot for us. In 1967 he wrote, *"Coventry are no longer church mice. Like the City's cathedral, they have risen from the ashes. Well might they be proud."*

At grass roots level, I was immune to all the politics. As the fairy tale unfolded, we adolescents stood under the covered end, and sang dirty songs of great inventiveness. We began to travel away, sampling our first illicit pints of Brickwoods and Fremlins. If we'd had such a thing as a fanzine then, it would have featured the players' unofficial nicknames. The press had taken rather grandly to calling George Curtis 'The Iron Man'. We knew him as 'The Pig'. Dave Clements was 'Little Rhino' (after Garrincha, 'Little Bird'). The assertiveness of his goal-line clearances won the indecisive Mick Kearns the title of 'Sheila'.

Eventually, I was recruited into Mammon, to sell *"Goal Tickets"*, in the streets surrounding the ground before each game. Each sealed ticket contained a player's name, and a predicted scoring time. Lucky punters whose time coincided with the opening goal won a cash prize. Dudley Kernick eat your heart out.

The commission was lousy, but a perk was free admission to the match. In those days, the surrounding streets were safe for teenagers earning pocket money. Free from soccer hooligans in designer denim. Free from horse dung. The only shouting came from us; *"Goteats! Gayar Goteats Hyar! Shillneach!"* or something like that.

Away matches provided cash flow problems. Sixth formers and younger teachers at my comprehensive clubbed together and chartered our own coaches. This sort of enterprise probably pre-empted some of the more radical parts of the National Curriculum. When fervour in the city was at its height, actually commandeering a public service vehicle at all became a problem. There were Saturdays during the Second Division promotion push when the Mystery and Circular Tour Trade collapsed, because everything with wheels and seats had been hired, and pointed towards Huddersfield or Cardiff. Exit roads for derbies at Wolverhampton or Birmingham looked like Saigon.

"Coventry City had become an institution in Division One. Never relegated (though God knows they've tried hard enough in the past), and the only football team to feature in a Monty Python sketch."

I saw my first football violence at Fratton Park. Drunken sailors on shore leave. They were attacking each other rather than opposing fans. I got run over before a home Cup tie against Mansfield. There was this almighty bang, and I must have rolled thirty feet. I crawled off the road, and sat on a wall. Then my mates joined me. *"Hey! A kid's just been hit by a car over there!"* they shouted. I didn't have the heart to tell them. We'd have missed the kick-off, going down to Casualty.

None of this deterred me from following 'The Sky Blues'. They remain a beacon for inventiveness even today. One only has to look at the wonderful variety shown in John Sillett's press releases, after the dozen or so pastings last season, to see that the old spirit is there.

Yet somehow the magic of watching Palace spring their eight millionth offside trap against a bunch of willing shire horses in Asics shirts doesn't match the excitement of the Sixties. Seeing The Applejacks live as pre-match entertainment, or queuing up to meet Willie Humphries and Ronnie Rees on 'Pop and Crisps' Night, was what it was all about. Being sent to Coventry definitely isn't so much fun any more.

Geoff Veasey

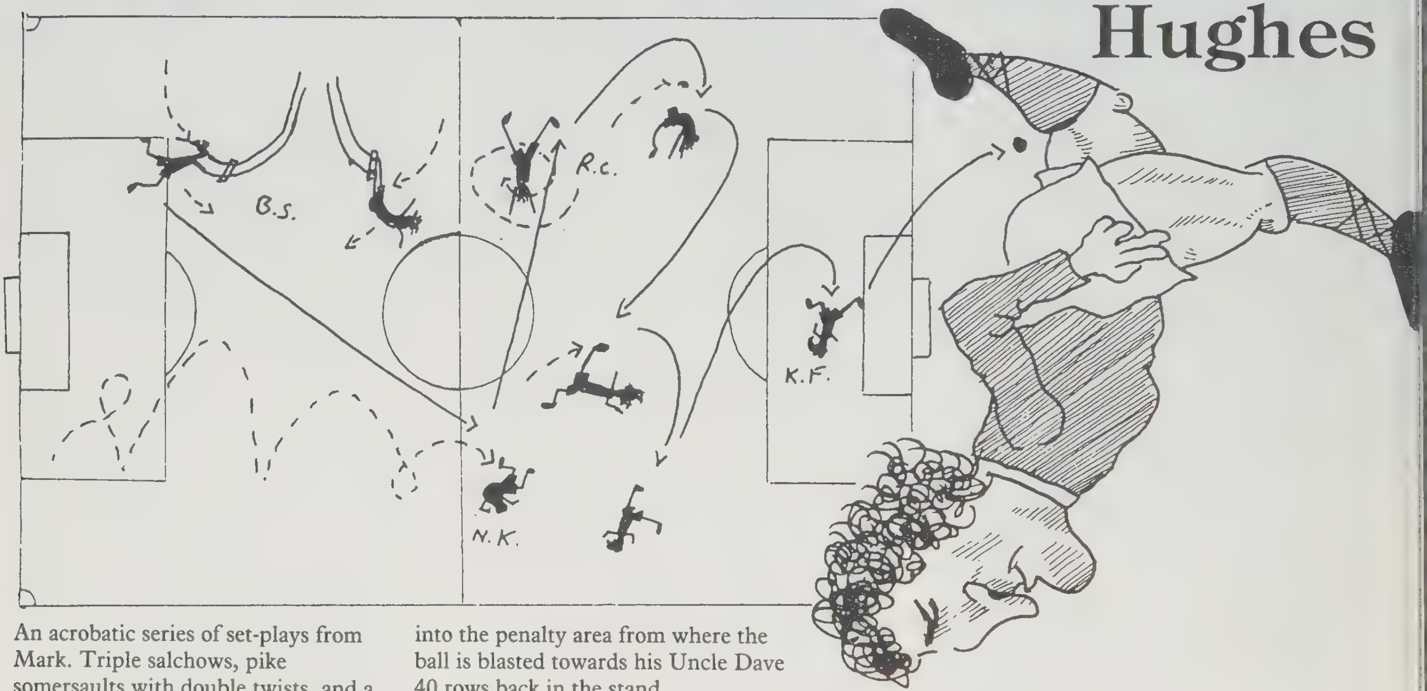
Bulgaria's ace netminder

JORDAN FILIPOV'S FUN PAGE

HA! A BANANA SHOT!

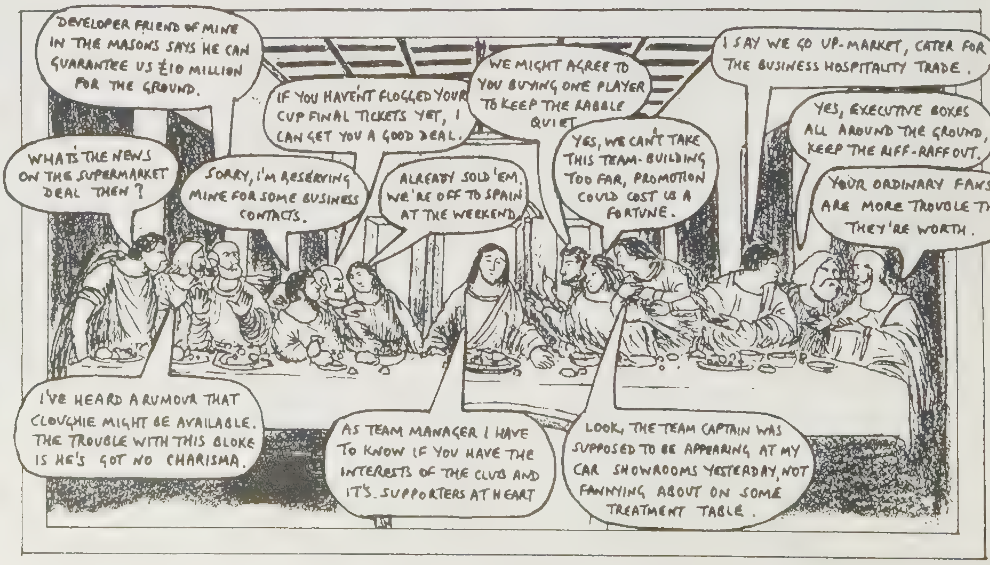
7
HA! THE REF'S TAKEN MY NUMBER!

LET'S TALK TACTICS WITH: Mark Hughes



An acrobatic series of set-plays from Mark. Triple salchows, pike somersaults with double twists, and a couple of saucy cartwheels take our man into the penalty area from where the ball is blasted towards his Uncle Dave 40 rows back in the stand.

THE FIRST BOARD MEETING


DEVELOPER FRIEND OF MINE IN THE MASONS SAYS HE CAN GUARANTEE US £10 MILLION FOR THE GROUND.
IF YOU HAVEN'T FLOGGED YOUR CUP FINAL TICKETS YET, I CAN GET YOU A GOOD DEAL.
WE MIGHT AGREE TO YOU BUYING ONE PLAYER TO KEEP THE RABBLE QUIET.
I SAY WE GO UP-MARKET, CATER FOR THE BUSINESS HOSPITALITY TRADE.
YES, EXECUTIVE BOXES ALL AROUND THE GROUND, KEEP THE RIFF-RAFF OUT.
WHAT'S THE NEWS ON THE SUPERMARKET DEAL THEN?
SORRY, I'M RESERVING MINE FOR SOME BUSINESS CONTACTS.
ALREADY SOLD 'EM. WE'RE OFF TO SPAIN AT THE WEEKEND.
YES, WE CAN'T TAKE THIS TEAM-BUILDING TOO FAR, PROMOTION COULD COST US A FORTUNE.
YOUR ORDINARY FANS ARE MORE TROUBLE THAN THEY'RE WORTH.
I'VE HEARD A RUMOUR THAT CLOUGHIE MIGHT BE AVAILABLE. THE TROUBLE WITH THIS BLOKE IS HE'S GOT NO CHARISMA.
AS TEAM MANAGER I HAVE TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE THE INTERESTS OF THE CLUB AND IT'S SUPPORTERS AT HEART
LOOK, THE TEAM CAPTAIN WAS SUPPOSED TO BE APPEARING AT MY CAR SHOWROOMS YESTERDAY, NOT FANNYING ABOUT ON SOME TREATMENT TABLE.

THE WOLFMAN COMETH

Pushing my four-year-old in a shopping trolley around Presto's on the day before Christmas Eve, I nearly clashed with another trolley coming in at right angles from the aisle. The other trolley paused and pulled back to let me through. I glanced up from the frozen peas to nod thanks, then almost ran into a mountain of pickled onion jars. It was the Wolf Man himself.

Yet bumping into Bernie Slaven in Presto's should not have been such a shock. He's always been one of us. He lives near the ground. He can often be seen exercising his dog in the streets around Ayresome (the shopping trolley was piled high with Bonio). He votes Labour — I know this because a mate of mine once canvassed his girlfriend. And he knows what it's like at the sharp-end.

Slaven was working as a part-time gardener for Glasgow Council when Middlesbrough signed him. It now seems unbelievable, but he had written to every English First and Second Division Club asking for a trial. The previous season he had been Scotland's leading goal-scorer, albeit with unfashionable Albion Rovers. He had previously been with Morton, Airdrie and Queen of the South. Willie Maddren may not have done much else as manager of the Boro, but the club can never thank him sufficiently for having the foresight to sign Slaven (we'll forget about Mick Buckley and Pat Heard). Maddren was quoted at the time as saying that he'd never before met a Scot who didn't smoke or drink. But then, it was only 12 months since Bobby Murdoch had departed.

Slaven arrived in October 1985. For the last four seasons he has been Boro's leading scorer. In just over four years he has become the tenth highest goal scorer for Middlesbrough of all time.

I don't know who first named Slaven 'The Wolf Man', but it suits him. It's a tabloid cliche to talk of strikers being *"hungry"* for goals. But Slaven actually *looks* hungry. His sunken cheeks and saturnine features stand in stark contrast to the bleach-permed, fresh faced complexions of most of the Boro squad. These Jason Donovan look-a-likes clearly don't know suffering like Bernie does. And there is more than a passing resemblance to Wolfman Jack, the brilliant but lonely improvising disc-jockey in *American Graffitti.*

"Bernie has never thought the grass would be greener on the other side, because he's been there, and knows it isn't."

The Boro fanzine *Fly Me To The Moon* produced 'Slaven for Scotland' tee-shirts. They sold out in a fortnight. But Bernie knew that he would never play for Scotland. As far as he is aware, Andy Roxburgh had not even watched him play until a cup-tie with Everton last season. But Jack Charlton knew the way to Ayresome, and yet another Irish grandfather was conjured out of Erin's mists...

Inevitably, Slaven scored on his international debut. It was a rebound from a penalty — but it was he who had won the penalty. Suddenly, our dreams became reality — Slaven was going to Italy!

He went but never made it on to the bench. With Aldridge substituted in every game, and only two Irish goals in all — surely Slaven should have had his chance? Those last 20 minutes against Italy, with Ireland 1-0 down, the inevitable would have happened — Juventus would have snapped him up. (You think I'm dreaming? I also dreamt that Sunderland were in Division One — and look what happened!)

Slaven is not faultless. He rarely tackles, is frequently offside and has never been known to kick a ball with his right foot. But his teamwork is improving, and recently he was spotted passing a ball to Peter Davenport. His genius is in scoring with his left. From any angle, from any distance. One of the many bitter-sweet memories of the Division One relegation season was the Coventry game, when he produced a hat-trick before half-time — all from volleys, one with his back to goal. And when he scores, does he know how to celebrate! He gives the impression of wanting desperately to consummate his love-affair with the Boro fans. He used to attempt to climb into the crowd, until vicious spikes on top of the railings at Ayresome put paid to that. Now he throws himself to his knees, arches his back and raises his arms high in the air. On a wet day, he glides towards us like that in slow motion.

For me, his finest hour was the last game of the 1989-90 season against Newcastle. Boro had to win to have a chance of Second Division survival. Mischievous reports in the local press said Bernie wanted to leave if Boro went down — and Celtic were interested. Slaven was clearly incensed that his loyalty was being questioned before such a crucial match. He tore Newcastle apart. Covering in defence, tackling in midfield, he made two goals for Ian Baird — and scored two himself. The local TV station captured the look on his face when the fourth went in: eyes closed, head back, quietly smiling — consummation achieved.

Bernie must have had a quiet laugh when Manchester United paid that ludicrous £2.3 million for his best mate, Gary Pallister. Bernie has never thought the grass would be greener on the other side, because he's been there, and knows it isn't. Last season he signed an extension to his contract before he needed to. As he put it in the local press: *"I'm making a good living. I like the town. I like the fans. Why move? I'm happy I'm staying."*

So are we, Bernie, so are we.

Dave Carter

Thanks a Bra

For me, the World Cup begins in 1970. Much to my regret, I seem to be the only twenty-eight-year-old around with no personal recollection of Geoff Hurst's hat trick or a bunch of marauding Koreans and I can only assume I spent those heady days of 1966 shut away in my bedroom, doing penance for more Post-Impressionist crayon work on the bathroom wallpaper.

No way would I overlook the Mexico finals, though. I was now nine, acne was still just another London suburb and 'footer' was well and truly in my blood. Once the domestic season ended, the kiddies' media got into full swing and a glut of World Cup comics, bubblegum cards and renditions of *"Back Home"* made it clear that something special was just around the corner.

A friend and I set to with a series of rotating cardboard discs, provided free by some juvenile rag, in the guise of a World Cup 'computer' (this *was* two decades ago, remember). Twiddle the discs in the correct order and this primitive database predicted the result of each game. It threw up a final of Israel *v* Bulgaria and was promptly converted into frisbees.

A stronger grip on the imagination was exerted by one of the more fancied teams. While Brazil's pedigree in the World Cup meant bugger all to me — the last time they'd won it I was still coming to terms with a potty — I did like the sound of their players. Rivelino, Clodoaldo, Tostao; glorious, exotic names which rolled round the mouth like vintage claret and carried a romance that Terry Cooper and Brian Labone couldn't quite live up to.

So I discovered treachery at the same time as discovering Brazilian football and for the only time in my life turned my back on England.

Reigning champions they may have been, but the English never really looked at home in Latin America. Sir Alf's stiff upper lip, Bobby Charlton's wispy pate and Bobby Moore's excursion into the Colombian jewellery trade; they stuck out like a sore thumb, and while the head-banging frustration of Leon wasn't entirely wasted on me, I don't remember losing much sleep over their downfall. I often wish I could manage such apathy nowadays.

But Brazil; now you're talking. The cool dudes in town, they swaggered through game after game like they owned the place and to someone who still considered John Noakes a hero, they were gods.

Everyone knew Pele. I'd read how he'd been so poor as a boy he and his mates used grapefruit for footballs. Thanks to him I'd spent another afternoon locked in my room after being caught playing 'keepie-up' with a head of lettuce.

Most of the memories stem from him. The shot from the halfway line that had Ivo Viktor scrambling back from the edge of the penalty area, his constipation cured forever. The dummy he sold to Uruguay's goalie Mazurkiewiecz without even being in possession of the ball, and of course the text book header that sent Gordon Banks into the realms of legend.

Pele, however, was just part of the gang of five that set these finals alight. While he provided the poise up front, henchman Jairzinho ran riot on both flanks with the sort of pace and directness that has full backs screaming in their sleep.

After a sluggish Brazilian start in the opening game with Czechoslovakia, it was Jairzinho who completed the comeback, beating four men in a forty yard run, before planting the ball past Viktor to seal a 4-1 victory. He went on to score in every match, rolled up in Germany four years later sporting a ludicrous Stylistics hairstyle and promptly sank without trace.

Behind him and Pele came the artillery. Roberto Rivelino wore a dapper 'tache that made him look more Mexican than most of the locals and packed a shot capable of demolishing the average warehouse. Stomping around in midfield looking as mad as hell with everyone, he'd unleash shots from highly optimistic distances that left goalkeepers either foraging about in the back of the net or else thanking their lucky stars that we were still in the era of square goal posts.

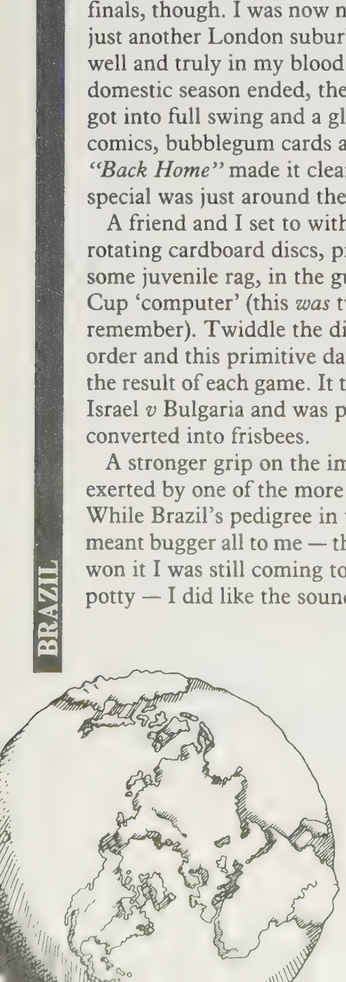
Gerson was more of the same. When he wasn't bombarding the goal from the penalty box, he was spraying around the type of long range pass we used to outlaw in *Subbuteo* because it looked too unrealistic. After dominating the Czech game, he even received a pat on the back from the linesman while being substituted by Bill Cosby lookalike Paulo Cesar. He saved his best for last, though, following up a twenty-five-yard score in the final with a diagonal ball across virtually the whole of Italy's half that fell just on to Pele's head at the far post, leading to Brazil's third goal. I sat wide-eyed in front of our colour TV, taking it all in and wondering if he could have done the same with a grapefruit.

Compering this cabaret was Tostao, and if the balding Gerson was slightly at odds with the hip Brazilian image, then Tostao was positively the last person you'd expect to see flexing his pecs on Copacabana Beach. A pallid, slight figure reminiscent of a young Peter Sellers, he was the upstart you find in every school yard, running rings round the older lads before being hauled behind the gym to get a good cuffing for his insolence.

A recently fixed detached retina is something one could happily do without when lining up against the likes of Uruguay and Italy, but despite this question mark against his 'bottle', Tostao was in the thick of things from the beginning, and in terms of natural talent, only Pele shone brighter.

Against England, he delivered an elbow to Alan Ball's throat that many men twice his size wouldn't have dared emulate, before weaving past Moore and Tommy Wright and turning on the spot to launch the cross to Pele that resulted in Jairzinho's goal. He back-heeled the ball on in mid-air at the near post to set up Pele's goal against Romania and then, from the tightest of angles, blasted home the second in the quarter final with Peru.

"When he wasn't bombarding the goal from the penalty box, he was spraying around the type of long range pass we used to outlaw in Subbuteo because it looked too unrealistic."



Thankfully for the six teams that had to try and live with this lot on the same pitch, not everything about the Brazilians bore the Midas Touch. Manager Joao Saldanha might have led them unbeaten through the qualifying games, but his off-field rumour-mongering and general instability were to prove OTT even by South American standards. He was finally apprehended in possession of a firearm while *en route* for a deep and meaningful conversation with a newspaper reporter, and Mario Zagalo was hurriedly installed in the hot seat. Saldanha exited stage right, his parting shot (metaphorical) being a claim that Pele had a mystery illness and wouldn't see so much as a warm-up during the finals.

He made a better manager than a doctor: it was soon apparent that the only place Brazil looked peaky was in defence. Enthusing about his team twenty years on, it's easy to forget that they were a goal down to Czechoslovakia, allowed both Romania and Peru to come back twice in games which should have been buried and then had to fight back themselves in the Semi-Final, going 1-0 down to arch rivals Uruguay after only 18 minutes.

zilian

At the eye of the storm was goalkeeper Felix, a prototype Grobbelaar about whom most of Brazil had serious reservations. The lasting images are dramatic if nothing else; his spreadeagled dive *a la* Swan Lake that left him crumpled on the penalty spot while Dembrovski headed Romania's second into an empty net, and his cavalry charge off the line that didn't quite cut Italy off at the pass; Boninsegna slotting the ball home while Felix looked on from somewhere in midfield.

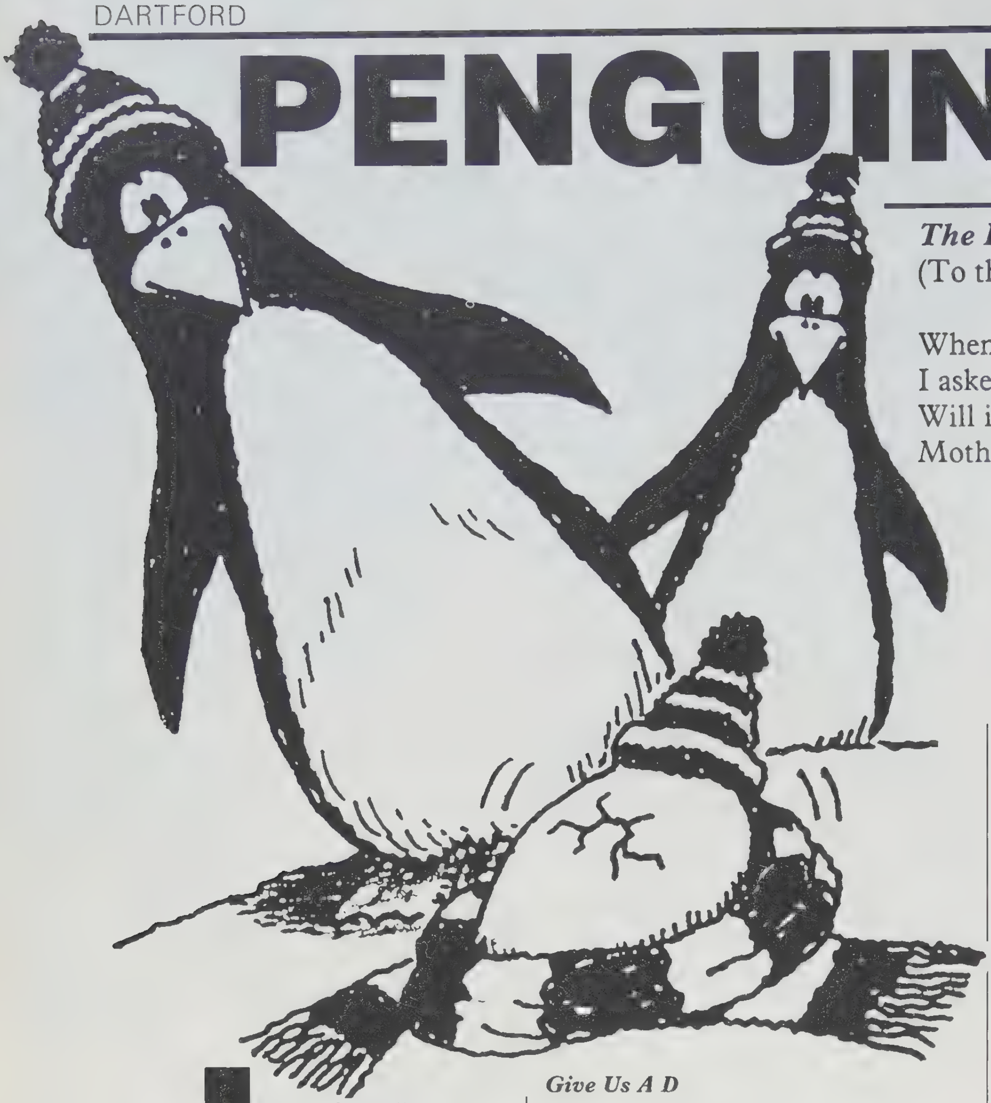
In front of him, a scrambling defence susceptible to pace just managed to keep its head above water. The fluffed headers and sliced clearances that gave several opposing forwards their best chance of the game passed into merciful obscurity after full back Carlos Alberto's long range piledriver that polished off Italy.

In a crazy way though, maybe it was the defence that helped set the 1970 Brazilians apart as perhaps football's most memorable team. They had a 'what-the-hell' resilience to goals against that you'd be pushed to find in many under-fifteen sides these days. Few, if any, teams since have clung so surely to the belief that conceded goals are irrelevant so long as you stick one more away at the other end. *"The best one can hope for with defence is not losing"*, Pele was to say afterwards, *"...regardless of style, the object of the game is to score goals."*

You can come out now, Don Howe, he's gone.

Jeffrey Prest

PENGUIN CLAS



The Penguin Egg Song
(To the tune of *Que Sera*)

When I was just a penguin egg,
I asked my mother where will I go,
Will it be Maidstone, Welling or Fleet,
Mother said, *"I don't know"*

Chorus:
I hope it's the Darts, the Darts,
I hope it's the Darts, the Darts,
I hope it's the Darts, the Darts,
They're the team for me.

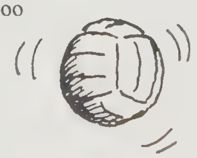
Just as Australians are renowned for their culture, Italians for their heroism, and Margaret Thatcher for her humanitarianism, so too are the supporters of Dartford FC famed throughout the world for their vocal prowess. To Dartford fans, singing on the terraces is not just a way to show their support for the team that they love, it is also a serious art form to which many of them have devoted several minutes of their lives.

Songwriting is a long-standing tradition at Dartford's Watling Street ground, and indeed its origins can be traced back for literally hundreds and hundreds of hours.

Whilst it may be true that many clubs have much louder vocal support than the Darts, surely none are as rich in quality of sound and depth of songwriting talent. Liverpool once reigned supreme as the songwriting capital of England, but Dartford has now taken its place. Where Lennon and McCartney once gave the world such classics as *Yellow Submarine* and *Sgt. Pepper*, Dartford now lead the way with the internationally acclaimed *Hes-sie, Hes-sie* song. Unfortunately, as this is occasionally mistaken for a fascist chant, it is rarely performed these days. Nevertheless, the songwriting boom continues and Dartford's supporters continue to take the world of music by storm. Here is a selection of some of their best...

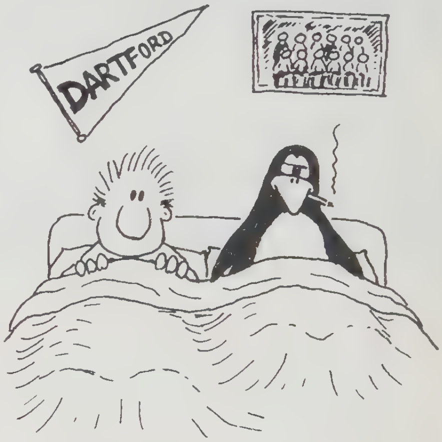
Give Us A D

Give us a Deeeee eee eee eee eee
-Deeeee eee eee eee eee
Aaaaaa aaa aaa aaa aaa
-Aaaaaa aaa aaa aaa aaa
Rrrrrr rrr rrr rrr rrr
-Rrrrrr rrr rrr rrr rrr
Teeeee eee eee eee eee
-Teeeee eee eee eee eee
Ffffff fff fff fff fff
-Ffffff fff fff fff fff
Oooooo ooo ooo ooo ooo
-Oooooo ooo ooo ooo ooo
Rrrrrr rrr rrr rrr rrr
-Rrrrrr rrr rrr rrr rrr
Deeeee eee eee eee eee
Deeeee eee eee eee eee
What have you got?
Dartford (**Clap, clap, clap**)
Dartford (**Clap, clap, clap**)...etc



Hessie

Hes — sie
Hes — sie
Hes — sie
Hes — sie
Hes — sie
Hes — sie
Hes — sie
Hes — sie
Hes — sie
Hes — sie



River Deep Penguin High

When I was a little boy, I had a puppy
That always followed me around,
But one day when I went fishing by the river,
I shouted *"Fetch,"* and the puppy drowned,
But now I'm better...feel alright,
Since I bought Peter...from the *Light*

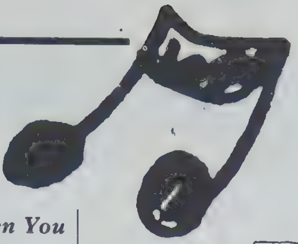
Chorus:
Hold my penguin in the sky,
River deep penguin high...yeh, yeh, yeh,
Puppy wet, penguin dry,
How I love my pen-guin
Peter, Peter, peng-uin

Der, der, der, der-dun
Der-der-der der-dun
Der-der-der der-dun
Der-der-dun

As the time went by, I fell in love with penguin,
Although I know it sounds absurd,
Just last night I took him up into my bedroom,
At last I'd finally pulled a bird,
And now I'm better...feel alright,
Since I bought Peter...from the *Light*

(*Repeat Chorus*)

SICS



If You Wanna Go To Heaven When You Die

(Sung to the tune of 'She'll Be Coming
Round The Mountain When She Comes')

If you wanna go to heaven when you die,
If you wanna go to heaven when you die,
Wear and black and white bonnet,
With Dartford written on it,
If you wanna go to heaven when you die.
If you're mentally retarded in the head,
You're more likely to watch Maidstone play instead,
And we think it's bloody funny,
That although they splash out money,
They've about as much charisma as the dead.

Dedicated Enemy Of Action

(to the tune of 'Dedicated Follower Of Fashion')

He blows it here, he blows it there,
He's always right, yet never fair,
Thinks he is the one we've paid to look at,
This pleasure spoiling individual always ruins the game,
Coz he's a dedicated enemy of action.

Oh yes he is (oh yes he is)
Oh yes he is (oh yes he is)
Life is built around killing entertainment,
Every time the ball goes in the box he stops the game,
Coz he's a dedicated enemy of action.

We Love You Dartford

We love you Dartford — we do
We love you Dartford — we do
We love you Dartford — we do
Oh Dartford we love you

Hail Dartford

Hail Dartford
Dartford Hail
Hail Dartford
Dartford Hail

DARTFORD F.C.
TEA • PIES.

Jerusalem

And did those feet in Kentish Times
Walk upon Dartford's pas-tures green,
And was the holey offside trap,
Of Bedworth's de-fence often seen?
One hundred years of his-tory,
We've even played at Wem-ber-ley,
But coz we need the dough, we must go
From Watling Street to Hithe of Green.

Then came the Stones, and all their gold,
Paid for the right of playing here:
We must have made a bob or two,
Not just on rent, but pies and beer,
At the last count, tenants did find,
Their ground had gone but they don't mind,
Coz they have paid a lot, now they 'squat',
But will they stay? — that is our fear.

Bring me a home that is our own!
Thoughts of a merger numb my brain.
Let not our Dartford ever be
Forsaken for financial gain.
I shall not cease from verbal fight,
Nor shall my key-board sleep in hand,
'Til we have built a sta-di-um
In Dartford's pleasant Cotton Lane.

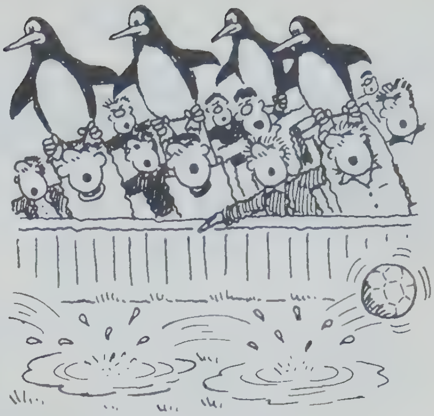
The Ref

(To the tune of 'Tea For Two')

4-4-2 and 3-4-3, doesn't make no sense to me,
That is why I'll always be — a ref.

I can't play for DFC, coz I've got no ability,
So I'm what I want to be — a ref.

People shout abuse at me, just because I can't quite see,
But it doesn't worry me — I'm deaf.



The Dambusters

(Hold penguin by the rear, raise aloft and fly in formation with fellow supporters)

Der...der der der der-der-der der
Der...der der der der-der-der der
Der...der-der der der...der-der
Der der der-der-der der...der
der
der
der
(*Repeat and Fade*)

We Love You Penguin

(New words to the famous 'We Love You Dartford' song. Written by Andrew Smith, aged six)

We love you pen-guin...we do,
We love you pen-guin...we do,
We love you pen-guin...we do,
Oh penguin we love you.

Peter Taylor's Black And White Army

Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army.

(**Chorus**)
Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army.

Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army,
Peter Taylor's black & white army.

(*Repeat...etc*)

Come On You Darts

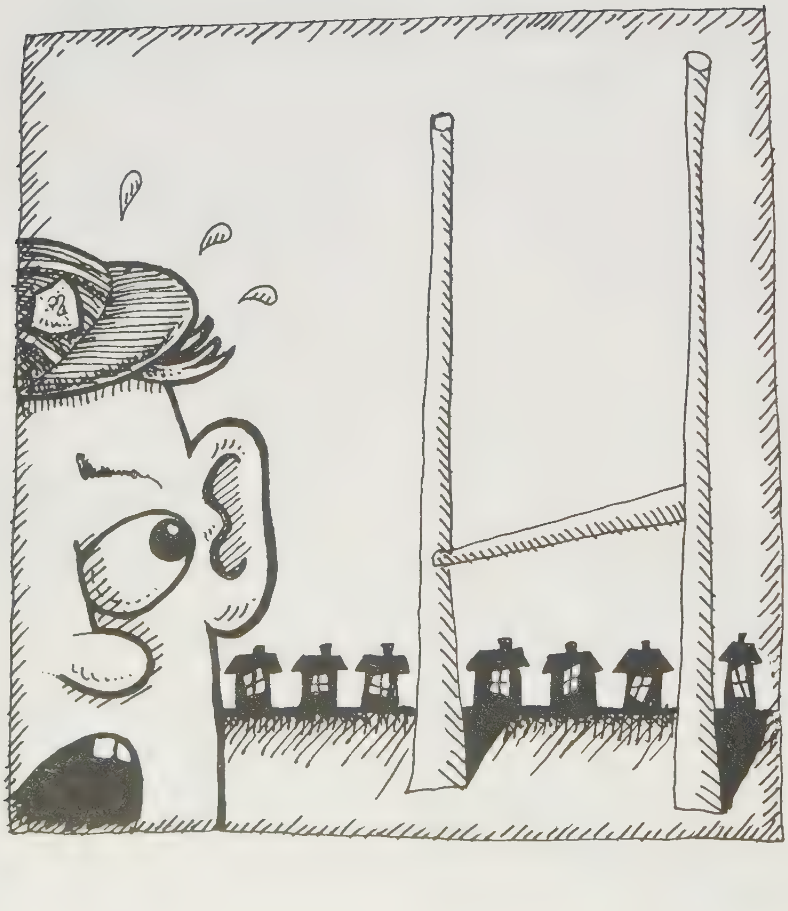
Come.....on....you....Daaaaarts
Come.....on....you....Daaaaarts

Well, there you have it. How many other clubs have such an exciting variety of songs and chants to encourage their boys? Certainly makes you think doesn't it! Doesn't it?

Mike Smith

Only the strongest survive that shattering ordeal known as park football. In the following three pages, two scarred veterans recount their stories...

The Ruling Class



When I started secondary school I was already a die-hard football fanatic, though bereft of any ability myself and despite my apprenticeship on the terraces of Elm Park watching those perennial Third Division (South) non-winners of anything, Reading. My Dad had started to follow them on his demob and insisted when I was old enough that I went along to endure/enjoy the spectacle. I suppose this was to build my character, seeing that conscription had finished and there was no army to make me into a man.

I had passed the 11-plus and went to grammar school. Imagine my gobsmacked horror on the first day on seeing those tell-tale H-shaped posts and the gradual dawning that there was *no* football at this place. I suppose rugby was alright, slithering about in the mud as long as I could avoid any semblance of a tackle, but it wasn't a patch on football.

Even so I was almost brainwashed --I read Michael Green's *The Art Of Coarse Rugby* and I thought *"Hey! These guys have a literature!"* The highlights of my football literature were Harry Johnstone's programme notes. I was almost drawn into the mystique of rugby, but just in time I found that coarse football also existed. Together with some school friends, equally dismayed about our sporting desert, I formed an *ad hoc* team to beat off the challenge from the kids on another local estate. We found a field, but we were told that cows had been using it, and the grass was a bit long. No matter. The game was all. We won, but more memorable were the intricate shimmies around the cow pats and the enforced use of the lob to get the ball to travel more than twelve inches.

My next meeting with the genre was at the factory where I worked in the holidays. My starting there coincided with a few of the men hankering for the days of their youth and wanting to get a factory team off the ground. A few happy games were spent running up and down precipitous pitches and changing in bus shelter sized huts. It was of course, as in all coarse football, *de rigueur* not to have full kit.

And so to University. This was where coarse football took off. Every student was *ipso facto* in a 'Soc' — hence Geogsoc, Engsoc, Medsoc, Frogsoc and Classsoc. These socs could each raise a coarse team (see rules below) at a push for a joke game on the Downs. Unfortunately, during a stirring performance for Frogsoc I was spotted by a scout for my Hall of Residence team and I was invited to play. Shock! Horror! They played in a league. The only excuses I can make are that we had a non-resident at centre back, that we played in the revolutionary formation of 5-3-2 (five full backs, three midfielders and two strikers) and that to finish our fixtures we had to start our last match at 7.30pm. Sounds normal? Not in April on a park pitch with no floodlights.

The scene switches to the mid-Seventies, and the London Borough of Sutton Friday night teachers' games are in full swing. Coarse football at its coarsest. You know the

sort of thing, fifteen players available Thursday afternoon, nine Friday morning because the woodwork teacher has decided he wants to finish building his canoe, and the geography teacher doesn't want to miss the chance to pull the Science student. So on to the phone. So we trawl the school, the streets, the bus queues and the litter bins and finally get to the match with perhaps a useful sixth former who was once a sub for Sutton Schools Under-11 district side, or the school secretary's husband or, on one glorious occasion, a woman goalkeeper.

Perhaps it should be emphasised that schools have PE teachers who can be useful footballers. We drongoes have playing alongside us semi-pros from teams such as Sutton United, Fisher, Carshalton Athletic and Dorking. This does not disqualify us from coarseness, however.

The Celtic v Rangers, Liverpool v Everton match was Cheam v Glastonbury. The game was always close, tense and played on a hillside with horizontal hailstones. These conditions were ever present, so in distant memory the matches merge into each other.

Was the game in question the one where our 'captain' hatched the cunning plan of using the slope, the wind and the hail to score straight from the second half kick-off only to find that it was Glastonbury's kick? Or the one where two whole teams lay on the ground laughing helplessly at the Cheam goalie (he was so feeble that his goal kicks were being blown back over his own line for a corner)? Or the one involving the female goalkeeper? The poor girl is under pressure and it's heading for about 7-0. Suddenly her team breaks away, a twenty-yard shot and the other keeper is left standing. He is actually a goalkeeper in his spare time so he is questioned about this move. *"Well, it was so quiet at my end I was trying to work out whether it would be better to drive home on the M25 or the A217."* Or the one when the Head of Geography failed to reach the pub, 100 yards from the ground? (He had decided to follow someone else so as not to lose his way, only it was the caretaker going home for his tea.)

These matches are bound together in the memory by the vision of hailstones bouncing off prematurely balding pates and players running backwards to minimise the pain.

The Rules Of Coarse Football

1. A coarse football team shall consist of more than 11 players on the day before the match, but less than 11 on the day of the match.
2. No coarse football match shall have a qualified referee, nor any linesman.
3. No coarse football team shall possess its own strip.
4. If strip is borrowed there shall be no more than eight matching shirts.
5. Not more than any three players shall wear the same colour socks and there shall be at least three different colours of shorts worn.
6. No quasi-professional jargon shall be used before, during or after a match with the exception of *"Shut the back door."*
7. After the match both teams shall meet in the pub, but each team shall nominate a player who cannot attend because he has to meet his girlfriend.
8. No player shall intentionally foul an opponent, but unintentional fouls caused by ineptitude shall be permissible.
9. No match shall last more than thirty minutes each way.
10. Teams shall be permitted to use ringers, but it must be understood that each ringer playing for a team in one match shall be permitted to play against that team in the next.
11. If the local pub has afternoon closing, the kick-off time and length of match shall be arranged such that the pub will be open at the end of said match.
12. Each team shall take the piss out of and/or laugh uncontrollably at any miskick, own goal etc. Any team not following this rule will be deemed to be taking the game too seriously and shall not be asked to play again.
13. Each team shall have a special team (cf American Football). This shall consist of an ageing former ball-player stuck out on the wing who shall take all throw-ins, corners, free kicks.
14. A team captain's only function shall be to take part in the toss-up (if there is one). No footballing ability is necessary or desirable.

Otherwise all the usual rules of football shall apply, except with the mutual agreement of both teams and the referee (if there is one).

Bev Town

The Morning After

9.30 am. Alarm goes. Why did I say I'd play this week? Why did I stay out so late? Retrieve boots from stair cupboard and scrape half-heartedly at three-week-old dirt.

10 am. Reach venue. Still awful taste in mouth not helped by two stale Weetabix. Join the rest of my unshaven, flatulent team in draughty changing rooms. Bleary eyes and weak banter. Holes in socks. Shorts for the fuller figure. Not our turn to put the nets up, so get more minutes' warmth before facing the by now horizontal rain.

10.25 am. Resplendent in orange and red stripes, we emerge for the 'warm up' involving five or six bad crosses and some inept shooting from twenty yards. Notice the other team. *"Have you seen the size of them?"* seems to be the most popular talking point.

10.30 am. The ref, equipped with obligatory Zapata moustache and too-tight shorts, gets the game underway. The pitch does not look as though it will suit our feared push and run style and the wind looks as though it will be, to say the least, a factor.

I am playing left wing because there are plenty of opportunities to have a rest there. They go close. I remark to their right back that their No. 10 looks nippy. He grunts. I can smell last night's beer on his breath. At least I think it was last night's.

10.50 am. We score. We have two or three useful players and they combined.

Personally perking up. Have realised my monosyllabic friend is 'not very good' and, amazingly, a slower runner than me. Have managed to deliver a couple of telling crosses but he got his own back by standing very close to my ear at a corner and beerily bellowing *"More urgency Blues."*

11 am. Twist ankle. It goes hot. I hobble, inelegantly. Can see some houses in the distance with upstairs curtains still drawn.

11.10 am. One of their moves breaks down due to their left half's hesitation and their centre forward yells at him.

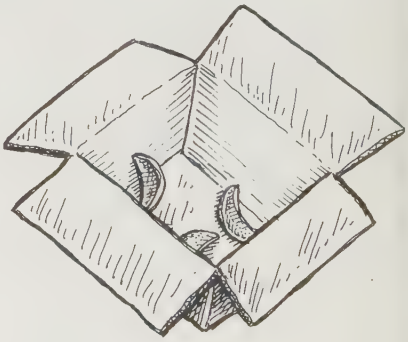
11.15 am. Dismayed to find last week's orange halves in box. Argument about who should be picking up their No. 10. Manager obsessed with lack of talking on field. Perhaps he'd like Clive James to play.

11.30 am. What the Football League would call *"a major incident"* occurs, that is, a bit of pushing between the shorter haircuts on the field. The referee loses all chance of ever being elected to the League committee by sensibly telling them to get on with it.

11.50 am. Cramp. Please don't let anyone else realise. Cramp is the ultimate indignity in Sunday League football. You get patronised by knuckle headed triathletes who treat your leg for a while extolling the virtues of that unheard of horror, midweek training.

12.00 am. They equalise. I think you know who scored.

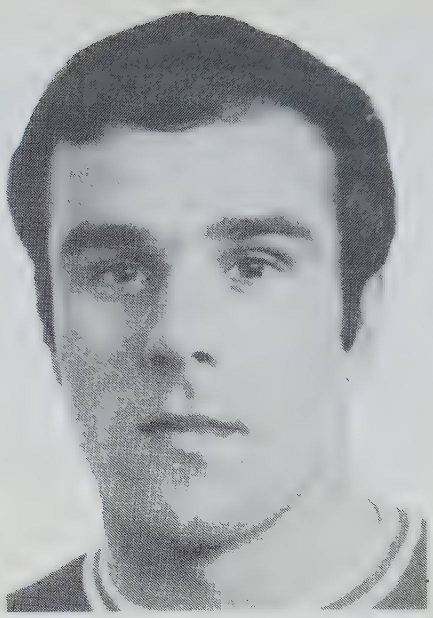
12.05 am. Five minutes left and I am praying nobody will pass to me let alone put one over the top for me to chase. I wish our sub had turned up. Why does anyone leave their warm bed to be sub anyway? I suppose the management use that telling one-liner, *"There's a good chance we'll be short this week."*



12.10 am. The moustache moves for the last time and we head for the showers. I'm wet through, my ankle still hurts and tomorrow I'll have to put up with unoriginal wags at work commenting on my restricted mobility. Can't wait till next week.

Keith Robertson

BIRD on the WING



Ronald P. Bird, I still haven't a clue what the 'P' stands for, joined Cardiff City in February 1966, from Bury. City and Bury were vying for the bottom of the table position at the time, and I've always liked to think that the transfer was manager Scoular's attempt to strengthen City and weaken Bury at the same time. Many Cardiff supporters initially said that it had precisely the opposite effect.

A winger of exceptional pace, what a shame I can't say that about his ability, Ronnie was one of Ninian Park's more eccentric characters. He made his debut in February 1966, but we had to wait until the last day of that year for his first goal, one of a pair he bagged in a 5-1 drubbing of Alan Dicks' cloggers from Bristol. I still like to think that Bristol full back Brian Drysdale was never the same man after Ronnie took him to the cleaners during the match.

His goals started arriving regularly during the 1967-68 season, his performances more characterised by frantic charges down the left wing, occasionally with the ball, leaving breathless full backs floundering in his wake. He was fine just so long as he ended up on the bye line, because he knew what to do in that eventuality, and a cross of varying quality would usually result. The problems started if, by some unfortunate circumstance, he ended up in the penalty area. Invariably, the move finished there, the ball having been deposited on to the terrace as he panicked.

In 1967, during a school exercise in English language, we were asked to write about our favourite sports star. I chose Bobby Charlton, my best mate chose Ronnie Bird. I quote; *"...always ready and willing to attack defenders, once he gets into the penalty area, he usually shoots himself..."* He might as well have done so during those early months with City. If only his level of skill matched his enthusiasm and effort, we would have had a world beater on our hands.

> ***"He looked up, drew the left foot back, and the inhabitants of the Canton Stand started heading for cover."***

Then, one afternoon in November 1968, he seemed to crack the whole secret of wing play. Blackburn Rovers were the opposition. Ronnie got the ball wide out on the left wing, slipped his marker on the outside, and then, horror of horrors, instead of going for the goal line, he headed for the penalty area. A few City players actually started lining up for the assumed goal kick. Not a bit of it. Ronnie got to the corner of the area, panicked, and a split second later, via a thunderbolt left foot shot, the ball was nestling in the back of the Grangetown End net with the crowd going wild.

Oxford United were the next witless wonders to fall victim to his burgeoning talents. He turned up in the inside right position, forty yards out, advanced about 10 yards, and let loose a shot straight out of the local Royal Ordnance Factory in terms of violence and accuracy. I don't think Jim Barron even knew for sure what it was as the ball flashed past him.

So why did we get to witness this sudden change in form? A few reasons could be suggested. The major one would have to be the import of a number of players that improved the side to a point that the situation allowed Ronnie a little more freedom than he had been used to.

For example, the services of the fading Bobby Ferguson were dispensed with, and in his place at left back, manager Scoular brought in a converted winger from non-League Lower Gornal, by the name of Gary Bell. For two wonderful seasons the pair of them ran the socks off a series of Second Division defences, and the goals flowed.

By this time, John Toshack had made the transition from lumbering giant to one of the best strikers outside the First Division, and had been teamed up front with the recently purchased Brian Clark. Ronnie, combined with Gary Bell, played a major part in Toshack and Clark bagging 100 goals in just two seasons.

But there were other helpers too. Brian Harris came from Everton to lend the side a touch of class at the back, where he formed a reliable central defence with the somewhat more robust (non-City supporters should read that as 'dirty') Don Murray. There was also Peter King on the right side of midfield. He'd been with the club for about six years at this time, and finally found himself in a side that wasn't fighting it out at the bottom of the table, whether in the First or Second Division. Mel Sutton, plucked from non-League like Bell and King, was the team donkey, while Barrie Jones ran the whole show from the middle of the park.

In goal, Fred Davies both entertained us one moment, and horrified us the next, brilliant in one match, inept in the following. Tony Hateley should have been made to write a thank you letter for one corner palmed expertly on to his waiting boot by dropsy Fred at St Andrews one afternoon. Right back 'end-of-move' Dave Carver trundled his way up and down the flank, consigning troublesome wingers to the isolation of the Ninian Park cinder track. Poor old Dave, took some awful stick from the terraces to the point where he was re-christened Dave Carverog, after the number of times the Sunday papers credited an opposition goal as *"Carver o.g."*.

When the hated Aston Villa came to visit in October 1969, Ronnie more or less settled the game. He helped set up two goals for John Toshack, and whacked in a penalty, too. But the moment of the afternoon was his second goal. He'd gone walkabout again, this time finding himself in the middle of the park, 30 yards out, with no defender anywhere near him. Well, there was Brian Tiler but he doesn't count. He looked up, drew the left foot back, and the inhabitants of the Canton Stand started heading for cover. No need, the ball was destined for the back of the net, and that's exactly where it ended up. We won 4-0. Ronnie's finest hour.

A thunderous effort against Goztepe Izmir in the Cup Winners' Cup, and a mortar shell of a job against Watford also stick in the memory. He smacked a tidy goal against Sheffield United, and another at Preston on the final day of the season, but it sadly signalled the end. He only played four games in 1970-71. Scoular first dispensed with wingers, then subtlety, as he signed the simian Warboys. Ronnie went to the footballers equivalent of the elephant's graveyard, Crewe Alexandra, to play one final season.

He's still involved with football, he might be fifty and play on one leg, but he coaches a local college side, and still puts himself on to play occasionally. When it was pointed out that he wasn't really eligible to play because he wasn't a student, the purveyor of the news got a two-word obscene answer. Quite right too, after all, you wouldn't tell a master how to play, and you shouldn't tell him when either.

Jon Howell

1925

Bribery Scandal! In 1925, Stenhousemuir goalkeeper Joe Shortt was offered £50 by a stranger at Lorbert Railway Station as an inducement to lose that afternoon's game. Shortt's reply was *"Go to Hell"* and he went on to play one of his best games ever as Stenhousemuir won 6-2. What a guy...

1928

Grandstand Horror! After a fire destroyed the club's wooden grandstand in 1928, a new structure was opened before a delighted crowd in August 1929. Their joy was short-lived, however, when they discovered that the architect had not provided staircases to allow public access to the seats.....

1951

Trend-Setting 'Muir! On November 7th 1951, the first floodlit game North of the border was held at Ochilview, when Stenhousemuir and Hibs battled it out in a challenge match which ended in a 5-3 victory for Hibs. The game ended prematurely when the Stenhousemuir treasurer ran out of shillings for the meter...

1955

Stanley Matthews Plays For Warriors! Stanley Matthews appeared in a Stenhousemuir jersey in a charity game v Falkirk in December 1955. Falkirk won, 5-2...thanks Stanley...

1972

Stenhousemuir Beat Rangers! The Warriors beat Glasgow Rangers 2-1 at Ibrox in a League Cup tie in 1972. The major stumbling block to Stenhousemuir's progress in the competition was the fact that they had lost the first leg 5-0 at Ochilview....

A Day In The Strife

Walking past McCowan's toffee works towards Stenhousemuir's Gladstone Road, you cannot fail to notice the lack of punters even as 3pm approaches. There can't be many senior clubs who just don't have a hardcore following. It could be said that Stenhousemuir have their regulars, but it could also be argued that this exclusive gathering consists of old men too infirm to catch a bus to watch local rivals Falkirk, or young boys who are too small to get on the bus by themselves. The other section of committed enthusiasts (committed being an unfortunate choice of phrase) on match day is a small group of long-term psychiatric patients from nearby Bellsdyke Hospital who are admitted free (some people will do anything for nothing!).

The Saturday afternoon attendance can often swell to 300 when joined by passers-by who have ignored the other attractions of this cultural Mecca of Stirlingshire and wandered through the turnstiles to find out where all the shouting was coming from.

Considering the far-from-capacity crowds mustered by Stenhousemuir, the recently renewed crush barriers seem an unnecessary luxury. When the club were pushing for promotion at the end of last season, there was no noticeable boost to attendance figures.

Entering the ground, I am always amazed at the acres of open space in front of me. It is not only the sparse crowd but the large playing surface and meagre range of facilities. Yet when I was a small boy I came here every Tuesday and Thursday to watch my team train and thought I was in Heaven. I was more involved with the club while still at school than I am now. I wrote the match programme for two years, sold it on a Saturday, painted turnstile doors and helped cut the grass. Now, fifteen years later, I stand on the terracing and see that little has changed in the intervening years. The man at the turnstile seems to pop up later at the pie stall and also appears to be the steward guarding the entrance to the stand. The young girls in the souvenir shop are the daughters of the same very busy man. This labour of love extends right through the club as, year after year, a handful of people struggle to keep the flame of Stenhousemuir FC burning in spite of the apathetic response of the local townspeople.

There is something timeless and priceless about the Warriors' little world. Nothing changes. Players come here either as a stepping stone to greater things (Willie Ormond, former Scotland manager and member of Hibernian's famous fifties frontline; Willie Wallace, a Lisbon Lion when Celtic won the European Cup in 1967; Stewart Kennedy, transferred to Rangers and winner of five caps for Scotland) or slip away into soccer oblivion. The old men who can remember the upsets and the disasters of days gone by can still come here and hurl abuse at the namby-pamby players of today who aren't fit to lace the boots of the heroes of the Warriors' halcyon days (you know, that time they won the Stirlingshire Cup....).

Maybe I'm being too hard on my home-town side but when you read newspaper reports of the team being 'adopted' by travelling fans from down South because of the friendly, small-town atmosphere, and that the team has a small cult following because of their reputation for consistent failure, the whole thing becomes quite sad.

> ***"The man at the turnstile seems to pop up later at the pie stall and also appears to be the steward guarding the entrance to the stand."***

> ***"When Stenhousemuir take the field to the sound of Talking Heads' 'Road To Nowhere', you cannot help but smile..."***

When Stenhousemuir take the field to the sound of Talking Heads' *Road To Nowhere*, you cannot help but smile and wonder if someone should have had the sense to switch off the PA system prior to that record being aired. For the next 90 minutes, the home team and another side from one of Scotland's far-flung soccer outposts serve up a football feast which reminds you that most of these players were in Junior football last season, playing merely for travelling expenses. This year, they get travelling expenses *and* their name in the *Falkirk Herald*. Little boys climb over the wall *with* their bikes and cycle round the perimeter track until boredom overtakes them and, completely underwhelmed by the proceedings, they leave via the same route. Small groups of supporters huddle in a circle to discuss their social activities since they last met two Saturdays ago. During a particularly action-free period of the game, a card school opens for business behind the visitors' goal. The Social Club, which is the team's lifeblood, is situated at one corner of the ground, but the curtains remain closed from 3pm to 4.40pm, presumably to prevent any football highlights interrupting the occupants' enjoyment.

There is no segregation at Ochilview and to say the atmosphere is informal would be a massive understatement. During one match, a particularly informal punter ambled *across* the pitch to obtain a pie rather than take the long trek around the terraces (the referee went into an apoplectic, whistle-blowing frenzy, but nobody seemed to notice).

The game ends with another two points disappearing into the sunset on board the visiting team's bus and the Warriors' faithful wander home discussing the dodgy offside decision, the ball that was kicked off the line, the blatant penalty.... and then consult the fixture list to see who Falkirk play next Saturday.

Teams like Stenhousemuir will always survive when dedicated supporters and officials strive from day to day to raise the cash to keep them afloat and when pride swells up inside when you're talking about your home town team.

I apologise if my story seems cynical because I don't really mean to be. It's just that a little success occasionally would make it all seem worthwhile. I still read my old Stenhousemuir programmes now and then and drink from my Stenhousemuir FC mug. I still remember watching my heroes training on cold and wet November nights and travelling on the team bus to hotbeds of football fever like Stranraer and Brechin. All 'Steny' people carry a piece of the Warriors in their heart and look for the result every Saturday night. But some things never change, and, as far as the future is concerned — *"Tonight...for Stenhousemuir FC....Obscurity Knocks!"*

Stephen Myles

1990

Promotion Dodgers! Although the club always deny any such rumours, Stenhousemuir's desire for promotion must be questioned. On numerous occasions, the Warriors have consistently come up with new ways of avoiding success after being on the verge of promotion with only a few Saturdays left of the season. The club fears that bigger crowds may mean that staircases will have to be added to the stands.....

MOURNING

It's fair to say that none of the world's great football events has ever taken place in December. This goes a long way towards explaining why the US Collegiate Championships are held that month. (And no, these aren't the gridiron Bowl games you might be vaguely familiar with, but real, honest-to-goodness football. Of a sort.) Popular as soccer may be in schools throughout the States, it pales in comparison to basketball and American football. Has the performance of the *"gallumphing side of corn-fed college boys"* (Brian Glanville) in Italia '90 begun to change that? Probably not.

American colleges take sport very seriously and, while true football hardly rivals its shoulder-padded namesake in terms of campus popularity, some schools have been known to make a tiny profit from their soccer 'program'. A national soccer championship has existed in one form or another since 1959, but the current set-up does not produce an overall champion. For one thing, there are two different governing bodies, the more popular being the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), which since 1974 has split its soccer-playing members into three divisions. Each stages its own play-off to produce a champion. Not surprisingly, Division One attracts most of the attention; its was the only championship shown on national TV, for example (sound familiar?). But there is no promotion and relegation between divisions, since schools are inherently divided according to undergraduate enrolment, whether they offer soccer scholarships, and so forth.

Spectator interest is roughly on a par with the fledgling professional leagues which have recently surfaced on the East and West coasts. Though the odd rivalry can attract 5,000 or so (most likely out of school loyalty rather than a passion for the game), a crowd approaching 1,000 is considered healthy for Division One and outstanding for Divisions Two and Three. In the vast gridiron bowls many schools allow their soccer teams to use, this resembles little more than a few ants in a bathtub. But with some teams now possessing quaint little soccer 'stadiums', some sort of atmosphere can be generated for big games, and a number of schools are supported by small armies of loyal fans.

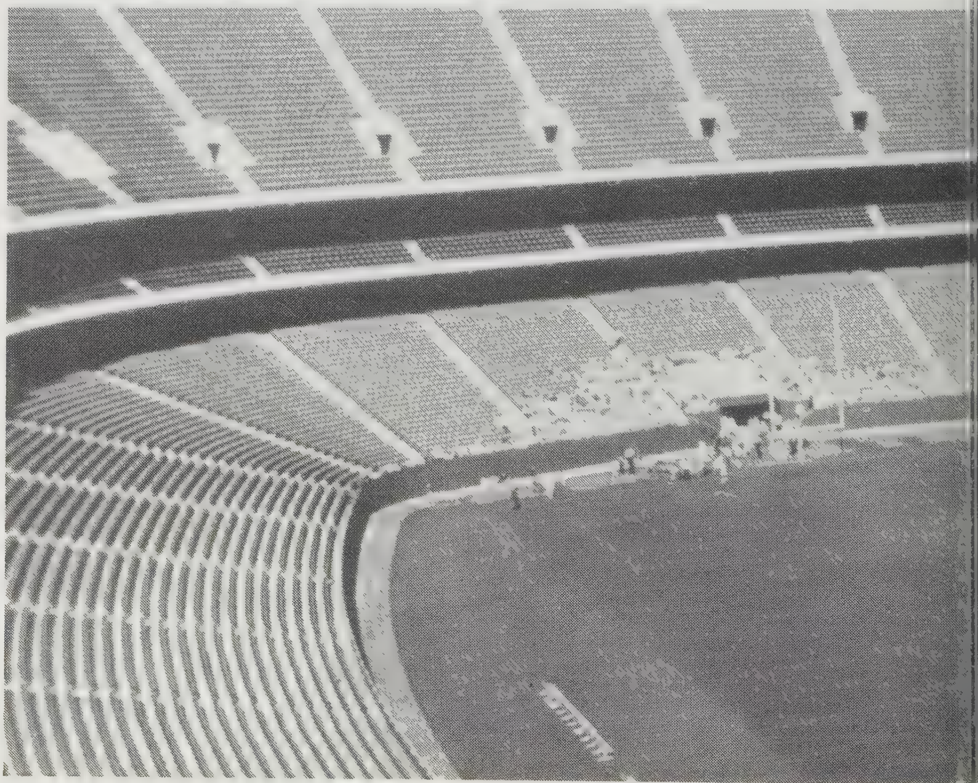
"Eight periods of extra time may turn even the fittest player into a bowl of custard, but not these college boys."

Tony Meola

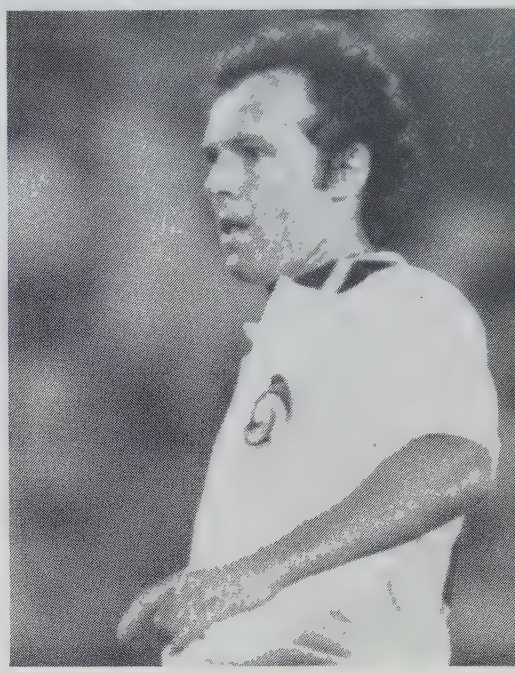
Last December's Division One Final was contested between the University of Virginia and the University of California — Santa Clara. The semis and final took place in Piscataway, New Jersey, roughly 200 miles from Virginia's campus, and 2,200 miles from Santa Clara. Why there, given that the weather in New Jersey at that time of year was better suited to ice skating?

According to the NCAA, selecting where to play the final is based on a number of criteria including which schools reach the semi-finals. Rutgers University, located in Piscataway, was one such school, and they were selected to host the festivities in spite of the obvious climatic difficulties.

The smattering of die-hard Santa Clara fans who made the transcontinental flight from California were no doubt pining for home upon their arrival. On the day of the final, to the surprise of only the NCAA, it was very cold: eleven degrees (F) below freezing, with a bitter wind thrown into the bargain. One player confessed he was grateful to be kicked during the match because it was about the only thing which



> ***"Many top coaches are American born and bred, men who more readily identify with American football or baseball heroes than people like Charlton or Beckenbauer..."***



kept his legs warm. But there was no chance of the game being postponed; after all, it could take months for New Jersey's weather to get any warmer.

As if that weren't enough to complain about, both of the semi-final matches had taken place only the day before. The players had less than 24 hours to catch their breath, nurse the previous day's wounds and prepare for the biggest match of the season. It is reasonably safe to assume whoever decided this had never played the game in his life or had a warped sense of humour.

The championship match was disjointed and not terribly entertaining – typical of most college soccer but hardly a scathing indictment of the American game under the circumstances. Virginia, with US international goalkeeper Tony Meola in top form, took the lead, but a defensive error late in the match gave Santa Clara a somewhat fortuitous equaliser. It was 1-1 at full-time.

The ensuing periods of extra-time produced little in terms of excitement and even less in terms of goals, but the match was not then decided by the normal penalty kick 'shoot-out'. In fact, it was never decided at all. After two further periods of 'overtime' – a grand total of 150 minutes of Arctic football – everything ground to a halt, and Santa Clara and Virginia were declared NCAA Division One Co-Champions.

Co-Champions! An American soccer match had ended in a draw. The fans had frozen to death for nothing. The teams, rated as the top two in the country for much of the season, had travelled thousands of miles to determine who was best and never did.

"Why not a replay?" you ask. A sensible question. Difficult as it supposedly is for American sports fans to accept that soccer matches may end in a draw, perhaps it might be even more difficult for them to accept the concept of a replay. Perhaps it would have cost everyone too much money to try again in a few days. Perhaps the players had exams to prepare for, or Christmas presents to buy.

Yet the decision to let the match stay drawn remains a curious one. Going to penalty kicks, which America finds *"exciting"*, or even the unrivalled drama of a coin toss would have proven more satisfactory to most. Yet the NCAA Soccer Rules Committee made no provision for this, and the game, in the words of one representative, was *"terminated due to environmental conditions."*

There is some rationale behind the decision to put an end to the day's play, if only to allow everybody to defrost. The embarrassing 1982 and 1985 finals, held in warmer places, went to a ridiculous eight periods of overtime before someone eventually found the net, to cheers of relief rather than delight from the cobweb-ridden fans who remained.

Which brings us to another point. Eight periods of extra time may turn even the fittest player into a bowl of custard, but not these college boys. Their rules allow for unlimited substitution, which means a considerable proportion of the playing squad figures in a match. Players can be replaced for five minutes, ie have a drink, talk tactics with the boss and then go back on. Indiana University's Jerry Yeagley is notorious for substituting four and five men at a time, a 'strategy' adopted from ice hockey which no doubt has helped him to become one of the most successful American college coaches, with championships in 1982, 1983 and 1988.

The college coaching scene is an intriguing blend. Many top coaches are American born and bred, men who more readily identify with American football or baseball heroes than people like Charlton or Beckenbauer; others are foreign imports who are initially unfamiliar with the Americanisation of the game. This has led to something of a clash of philosophies, with one set wishing for strict adoption of FIFA rules, and others caring not one jot about how the foreigners play. It should be said, however, that many native American coaches have pushed for the former, and that some of the foreign coaches favour the current system.

In one respect, the FIFA-lovers have won: should next season's final end in a draw, penalties will decide a winner. But unlimited substitution is quite another matter, being very much the American way of playing games. It's unlikely mere soccer will affect that. Besides, what do you expect from a bunch of folks who couldn't determine a champion?

David Wangerin

CAMPUS

MY TEAM

KING HAAKON ON NEWCASTLE UTD

TWENTIETH CENTURY Europe's only elected monarch, Haakon VII, was formerly Prince Carl of Denmark. Haakon is Norway's first king for some while — his predecessor, Haakon VI, died in 1380! Despite spending the war years here in Britain, His Majesty did not discover football until the late Sixties, when a chance encounter with a fellow countryman led to the trip to St James' Park that sparked off a life-long love affair with Newcastle United.

It was Great-Uncle Svenbo who suggested the expedition that was to change my life. *"Let's go down the Turk's Head for a bottle of 'dog' and a ham and pease pudding stotty,"* he said. We had just disembarked from the Olsen Line Bergen to Newcastle ferry and were on the bus bound for Fenwicks.

"But Great-Uncle Svenbo," my cousin, Prince Ulf protested, *"we have things to buy: blankets, anoraks, a pair of 'clackers' for my young nephew Stig, and many other items which our country's high VAT rate make prohibitively expensive. We have no time for drinking."*

"Away man, Ulf," Great-Uncle Svenbo said, *"what are you, a man or an Arctic Plover?"*

We were on to our fourth bottles of brown ale when a barrel-chested chap at the end of the bar began to berate the landlord in tones that were pure Stavanger: *"Away,"* he bellowed, *"I've been waiting for a pint longer than I have for a goal from Frank Clark!"*

Not wishing to see the hot-headed young Norske get himself into trouble we beckoned him over and introduced ourselves. Naturally our new chum was somewhat taken aback at meeting his monarch and several members of the Royal household in a pub off the Groat Market, but he quickly regained his composure. *"Pleased to meet you, Your Majesty,"* he said, seizing my hand in an iron grip, *"Benny Arentoft's the name."*

It was the legendary shin-kicker of St James' Park!

Two hours and six pints later we were piling out of Benny's Ford Zodiac and into the Gallowgate. I had not experienced an atmosphere like it since the day in Trondheim when 'Gobby' Rune Krogstad won the centenary whale blubber eating contest.

"Crikey," Prince Ulf remarked, *"It's a right hot-bed of soccer is this."* A bit of a cliche in England I know, but quite an original metaphor in Norwegian.

From that day on I was a Magpies fan. (My family were not so chuffed with my outing. I'd promised to bring back a selection of poly-cotton duvet covers. Instead they had to make do with a Fairs Cup Winners pennant and a poster of Jim Iley).

The moment I got home I set about rigging up an aerial in the barn so's we could watch the TV programme *Shoot!* on a Sunday afternoon. We'd sit up there, Ulf, Stig, Great-Uncle Svenbo and I, smoke a few herrings, and wait with bated breath to see if presenter George Taylor's false teeth would fall out on camera. They never did, but it was touch and go on a number of occasions.

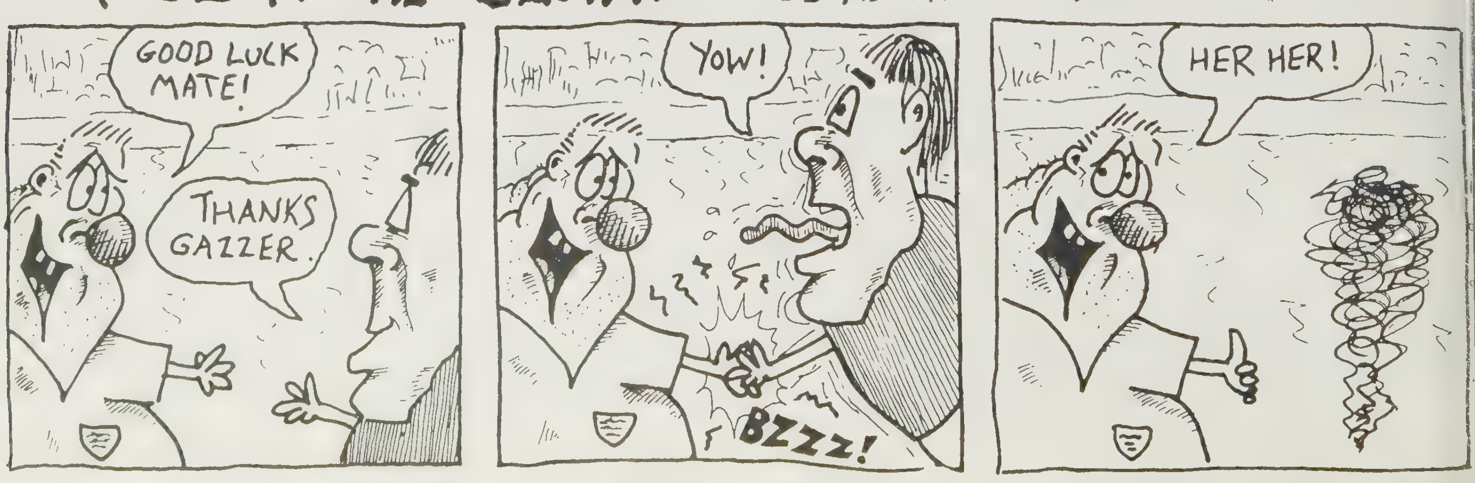
Afterwards we'd sit around and discuss some important football topic such as who had the bigger sideburns, John Tudor, or Middlesbrough's Derrick Downing. We never did settle that one, though 'King' John will always remain "Cock-of-the-North" when it comes to sideboards as far as one Scandanavian monarch is concerned!

At other times we'd rush out into the frozen lake in front of the palace and stage an 'instant replay' of the game we'd just seen. I'd be skipper Bobby Moncur, Ulf was David Craig and Great-Uncle Svenbo, who'd been struck on the head by a low-flying tin of pilchards during the allied assault on Narvik, was referee Clive Thomas. I remember on one occasion we managed to persuade Nobel Prize winning novelist Knut Hamsun to take part as "Supermac". Great-Uncle Svenbo sent him off in the first minute for collaborating with the Germans. He wouldn't play with us anymore after that.

Since those heady days there have been troubled times at St James'. Good players have slipped through our fingers like cod through "Handless" Arne Erlandsen's fishing net. Now that John Hall has a seat on the board I'm not sure what will happen. The club has never had much respect for the "little man" on the terraces. I offered to send them a Christmas tree one year and they never even replied to my letter.

Interview: Harry Pearson

GAZZER THE CLOWN – HE'S AS DAFT AS A BRUSH!


GOOD LUCK MATE!
THANKS GAZZER.
YOW!
BZZZ!
HER HER!

Don't Be Shay

By my reckoning it must have been 1956; my first encounter with The Shay. In those days, Hebden Bridge, where I lived, was a hotbed of Burnley support and I was seriously tempted by the glamour of the elite. However I resisted the Claret carrot and opted instead for The Shay way. Even at that early age I must have had an unerring eye for a lost cause.

And so it was I jumped on a 'football special' for a journey to obsession. My first fixture was a Third Division North clash with Wrexham. An evening game towards the end of the season, watched by the 'faithful' 5,000! No floodlights then, of course, the game commenced around 5.30pm. Needless to say the pie shops accounted for a high proportion of Town's revenue that night.

My first impression of The Shay was that this looked like what I had imagined a football ground should look like (we had hardly been exposed to television, let alone televised football). Sure there were agricultural tracts and industrial wasteland, but at least the playing area was vast and closely surrounded by a neat rectangular fence. The supporters, therefore, could be as close to the action as they wished. With a big enough crowd to cover up the aforementioned detractions, a good atmosphere made it seem like the real thing.

Moving on a few years and due to ailing finances (the pies had gone into recession) we had to re-admit speedway. You know the one: the guys roar around on their bikes, and the speccys at the front spend all evening removing cinders from their gums. Being awkward they required an oval track. So the neat rectangular fence had to be pulled back from the pitch to accommodate same. Worse was to come; the angle of track cut across the corners of the playing area! As Football League regulations demanded a rectangular playing area (and still do as far as I'm aware) this posed a particular problem.

This led to what I shall describe as the 'duckboard era'. The solution lay in the provision of portable corner triangles. Cunning constructions of pallet board covered with loose turf were carried on and laid in place prior to each game (you don't get this at Goodison, folks!). An integral corner flag provided a neat finishing touch.

"The heads go up, the keeper dives to no avail, and an enormous 'sod' nestles in the back of the net."

Well of course you could 'see the join', and turf does not adhere particularly well to wood especially during the rainy season. Any player venturing into these areas, therefore, was inviting a dislocated groin or at the very least, ridicule. The Town defenders became used to this and would remain on *terra firma* while the unsuspecting opposing wingers gave many and varied impressions of Cossack dancers.

The taking of throw-ins and corners posed different problems. Imagine the scene: a tense game, the last minute, a corner kick. The heads go up, the keeper dives to no avail, and an enormous 'sod' nestles in the back of the net. The crowd go wild, not at the relief of a late winner, but at the prospect of a winger lying prone on the boards and the centre forward removing soil from each of his facial apertures. The ball remains undisturbed in the arc.

Players left Halifax vowing never to 'tread the boards' again. Various expedients were suggested, among them the provision of crampons! This situation couldn't go on, of course, and eventually, after many complaints to the Football League, the width of the pitch had to be sacrificed. We were left with the narrow strip which still prevails to this day — the equal smallest playing area according to Simon Inglis.

On a personal level the pinnacle of my lengthy but none too glittering career in local soccer came with a cup final at The Shay. I well remember our pre-match pitch inspection and tactical talk. Actually the team were under a cloud at the time — this wasn't due to any psychological reason, but to the huge pall of cigarette smoke which hung over our little group. Anyway, although our home pitch was of 'postage stamp' dimensions, The Shay held no fears for us and we came home with the silverware.

Certain Town players adapted well to the strip. Freddie Hill, for instance, could easily play a diagonal pass from one touchline into the path of the onrushing Phil McCarthy on the other. But, on the whole, the legacy was in the 'W' type of game (Watford, Wednesday, Wimbledon, Wolves). A game in which the goalkeeper's kick-outs provide the main attacking thrust, and head tennis is the order of the day.

Following events of recent years, the ground has been soullessly re-named the 'Calderdale Sports Stadium' by the corporation owners. We are now promised a 'tartan track', whatever that might be, around the playing area. We will have to peer at the aerial combat in the distance through the high hurdles — a daunting prospect. But at least we can smile when we hear of the players complaining of having to play on the dreaded plastic. Don't they know Town used to play on wood!

Mike Smith

Halifax *v* Manchester United

ALAS P WARW

A dark, Midlands Tuesday evening and already a solid hour into Warwick District Council's planning committee — not the sort of place one usually looks for events which could shape the future of football as we know it.

But what's this low down the agenda sandwiched between Mrs Riley's controversial dormer window and the sanctioning of another old folk's home in this already overburdened spa?

Well at the moment it's little more than a field. Nothing more than a field if the truth be known. But if the town's football following gets its way this lowly sod could soon herald the corporeal homecoming of the gold and black warriors of old Leamington Spa.

The Brakes — so named because they drew both their players and their following from the nearby car parts plant — have been mothballed since their rightful home behind the Windmill pub went the way of countless others. It was changed overnight from the home of football legends to a whole estate-full of homes for the kind of people who write notes in their personal organisers or remind themselves to buy their prawn and mayos from Marks at coffee time to cut down on queuing time.

Ah, but they were halcyon days back in the early Eighties when The Brakes could do no wrong. Nobby and I would lean on the rail behind the goal and watch Dartford supporters at the other end disconsolately untie their Union Jack from the fence and hold it above their heads to shelter them from another drab Leamington day.

Under the mezzanine landings and the state-of-the-art central heating lurk a multitude of memories of great matches and great players.

To support AP Leamington in the Championship winning 1982-83 season was a little like supporting Chelsea a decade before. Characteristic matches involved the lads being two down at half-time and then rallying in the final stages to thrill the crowd of perhaps a hundred with a 3-2 win.

"And will it be the same now Nobby and I are both married and cannot rely on the odd dodgy UB40 to get us in for a child's admission? Will the ritual abuse of the referee be so comfortable now they look younger than we do?"

Of course the Windmill had seen its fair share of history before that season, though not in my years of wrapping up against the chill wind and rain with nothing but hope and a bag of rainbow drops from the Amrit Stores to keep my spirits up. Archeologists in years to come will find beneath the crumbled housing estate firm evidence of Birmingham Combination football having being played there in the distant 1970s.

Kevin Keegan (remember him?) and a corpulent Jimmy Greaves both exchanged pleasantries with the Windmill's famous daisy-covered penalty area. Leamington teams included players like the diminutive Herman Wilson. Hardly three-quarters the size of most visiting central defenders, Herman (a successful basketball player) would soon turn their sneers of scorn into gasps of amazement as he launched another gravity-defying leap to smack in a carefully rehearsed corner.

Star of the lot though was Kim Casey. Many thought him the spitting image of Tony Woodcock, few doubted him a far better striker. Top scorer for the season against the likes of Bridgnorth Town, he could also be relied upon to chat very amiably with the crowd while waiting for Herman to do his stuff from the set piece.

Years later I ran on to the pitch and, brushing aside the attentions of a handful of children, managed to get Casey's autograph. It wasn't for me, I explained, it was for Nobby, now exiled in London hoping for a break in the music business.

By a strange quirk of fate, Casey, as well as half the side and the manager Graham

Allner, left soon after for the sunnier climes of Kidderminster — the team whose greedy back-stabbing cost AP a place on the next rung up and, ultimately, the confidence of the councillors who booted The Brakes out.

With the Southern League Premier Championship in the bag after an exemplary 4-1 stuffing of Poole Town and Nobby and me already into our third post-match Guinness, the remnants of the inevitable pitch invasion still visible on our Dr Martens and the pub carpet, the rumours had become hard fact.

The football authorities, frankly scared of a visit to the ramshackle collection of corrugated iron we called the Gents and mindful of the age and doubtful origin of the hot dogs on offer, decided the Windmill was not up to the standards of the Alliance Premier League. A bit like enforcing a strict no-jeans rule at the door of Cardboard City, really.

OOR

ICK

Kidderminster, all sheepish smiles and perfect toilets, went up and Leamington was left with nothing more exciting than the Championship pennant to watch on a Saturday afternoon.

Within a few short seasons the club, now shorn of its pride and most of its players, dropped faster than Sammy Nelson's shorts. Despite the goalmouth efforts of huge Albert Johnson and the hopelessly mis-named Carlo Rossi, they sunk without trace down through relegation after relegation until they ran out of leagues to fall out of the bottom of.

It is with a heavy heart that most true Brakes' fans drive past the new housing estate which marks the spot where once, visitor after visitor had tasted the boot of Casey, the peculiar kick to the club's bitter and been sent packing.

Incidentally, and to prove there is no such thing as poetic justice, months after the new estate went on to the market only two of the houses have found buyers (despite the pathetic conciliatory gesture of naming it 'Brakesmead').

Could those noises in the night scaring off prospective mortgagees be the ghosts of Brakes players of old returning for one last lashing drive into the top corner only to find a fitted bar and step-through dining room in the way?

Will we travel the extra mile or so down to the proposed new ground, setting off a few minutes earlier to be assured of being an owner of one of the handful of programmes they manage to produce each week?

And will it be the same now Nobby and I are both married and cannot rely on the odd dodgy UB40 to get us in for a child's admission? Will the ritual abuse of the referee be so comfortable now they look younger than we do?

Well, I am willing to give it a try. See you at the Town End, Nobby, and none of that ketchup on mine.

Matthew Salisbury

LEAMINGTON F.C.

Chairman: M. Brady
Manager: John Hanna
Asst. Manager/Coach: Pat Brady
Commercial Director/Press Oficer: Bill Branston
0926 26039 (24 hr Ansaphone)
Address & Tel. No. of ground: 'The Windmill', Tachbrook Road, Leamington Spa.
Simple ground directions: Leave A41 at Bishops Tachbrook turning, 2 miles into Le n Spa. Ground on right hand side
No. of seats: 440
Covered accommodation: 1,600
Year formed: 1945
Previous names: Lockheed Leamington
Previous grounds: none
Dav for midweek home matches: Tuesday
Record attendance: 3,200 v. Staffprd Rangers F.A. Cup 1975
Best performance in: F.A. Cup: 1978 2nd Round
F.A. Trophy: 1983-4 Quarter Finals
Clubhouse details: Open to non members match days (before and after nacks available
Past players who progressed into the Football League: Roger Brown (Bournemouth, Norwich, Fulham), Vince O'Keefe (Exeter, Torquay), Errington Kelly (Bristol Rovers, Peterborough), Maurice Muir (Northampton), Mark Buckland (Wolves)
Programme Editor: M Berry
Programme details: 24 pages, 25p
Record transfer fee paid: Various
Senior Honours: Birmingham Senior Cup (3), Southern Leaue Cu , Southern League Premiership Trophy Southern League Champions, 2nd Round F.A. Cup 1978, Quarter Final F.A. Trophy 1984
Club captain (1985-86):

Secretary: Martin Higgins
Address & Tel. No.: 12 Scott Road, Leamington Spa
0926 2373 d
Physiothera
Club shop: s. 0926 26039
Capacity: 5,0
Floodlights: Yes
Sponsors: 3D Wyndows
Nickname: The Brakes
Club Colours: Gold, Black
Change colours: All White rm
vious Leagues:
Midland, Southern
Alliance Premier
(as A.P. Leamington)
Local News eamington Morning News
Leaming r, Coventry Telegraph
Record transfer ed: for Roger Brown from Bournemouth
Player of the year (1985-86):

Green

Fingers

Que sera sera but I didn't make Jack Charlton's squad for 'Irelly'. Retiring twenty years ago didn't help but I thought my comeback for the Rest of the World against Ireland (Man of the Match, Irish Advertising Awards Festival, Kinsale 1987) had caught the eye. It was not to be. You know how it feels, Liam.

In retrospect my Irish soccer career peaked one monsoon Sunday afternoon in April 1971. The occasion was my first and last appearance in the League of Ireland and, fact being stranger than fiction, it came about like this.

I had reached the age when lunch doesn't just weigh on the conscience. But no gymnasium for me. If I was to get in shape it would be in the service of the game I love. Wasn't I a qualified FA coach? I'd offer my assistance to one of the Dublin clubs.

A journalist friend arranged for me to go to Tolka Park one evening. He had seemed bemused at my request for an introduction and amused to discover that, twenty years before, I had played for Crystal Palace juniors.

To judge from my reception at the Drumcondra Football Club you would have thought I'd come straight from the Liverpool first team. Even allowing for the exaggerated respect given to cross channel players in those days it was excessive.

I had been a goalkeeper. A rather small, extremely cowardly goalkeeper. The kind that does not improve with age. Once agility has gone and there is no bulk to compensate. And it's time I confessed that I never really retired. I just ran out of clubs prepared to pay me to play.

So I had no professional kit. No bulky old shapeless black sweat-suit that gives a pro integrity and cloaks him in anonymity. Worse, I did have a bright green tracksuit clearly purchased for the occasion. There is nowhere to hide during a five-a-side practice match for an aged keeper wearing a bright green tracksuit and playing from trace memory. The pain of being out of condition was nothing to the embarrassment of being out of touch.

This was enhanced by the attitude of the other players. Instead of the sniggers I expected, I got nods of encouragement. *"Ah, it's always hard the first night back."*

It was only then I realised that I *was* back. Back in training. How had this come about? I had not offered myself as a player, merely followed Pavlov's Law on the training ground. The answer was contained in the Dublin evening paper. **'Former Palace Keeper To Join Drums?'** said a small headline. Some journalists will do anything for a story.

> ***"I had been a goalkeeper. A rather small, extremely cowardly goalkeeper. The kind that does not improve with age."***

A few weeks later I was still in training. A little fitter and marginally better at stopping footballs. The season was drawing to a close and the time was ripe for Robert Prole to make history.

Robert was the manager of Drumcondra. Not merely a man of few words but a Protestant of few words. Which means a man of very few words indeed. His conversation technique involved approaching very close, standing perfectly still, looking at your feet and saying nothing. The police could have learned much from his technique. You knew he had something to say. You knew he would eventually say it. It was merely a question of not cracking up before he did.

On the evening in question he stood next to me while I towelled myself down after the post-training bath. I was completely dressed by the time he spoke. If I had not known my man it could have been an anxious period.

"Will you play for the reserves Friday night?" he muttered eventually. It was a long sentence for Robert but my heart was soaring long before the end. Of course I protested, scoffed, laughed. Me? Play again after all this time? I'd finished with all that. What's that? Help the young players along? Coach them from the pitch? Well that was different. Give something back to the game. How could I refuse such eloquence.

Friday night. Drumcondra Reserves versus Drogheda Reserves. League of Ireland B. Kick off 8pm. Wait a minute. What about lights? *"We have lights."* The training lights are pointed out to me. I laugh nervously.

The match kicks off. Never mind the goalkeeping, watch the acting. Histrionically, I am well worth the admission money. It's a pity so few have paid it. Pointing, prancing, gesturing, glaring at opponents, hanging off the crossbar, pushing my young defenders into position, exchanging terse *bon mots* with the referee. I even think about spitting but decide against it since attempts in the past have always rebounded against me. And I find that age has improved my vocal powers no end. I call everyone *"son"*: *"Come on, son!"*, *"Hold it, son!"* My voice booms round the empty stadium. I notice that I am probably old enough to be even the referee's father.

"Get up, son!" I've told my defenders to play well up. The last thing I want is a crowded goalmouth. And, thanks to my foghorn voice, it seems to work. I intercept all through balls on the edge of my area. Isn't he fast off his line? They don't seem to realise I'm starting ten yards out of goal. Why don't they lob it over my head? It doesn't seem to occur to them.

Corner kicks are interesting. Any high cross goes up beyond the range of the lights. The trick is to go for the point where you anticipate re-entry. This seems to work.

I am fascinated by the Drogheda centre forward. He is an African. But he speaks with a Drogheda accent. And his name is Paddy Keogh. Can this be true? It can, the nuns have seen to that.

Emergency! One of their forwards is clean through. There is nothing I can do but advance and spread myself as per the

coaching manual. The shot hits me and is deflected over the bar. Great save! On such chance moments are reputations made and lost.

> ***"Back in the dressing room I recognise my colleagues and realise why we're at the bottom of the league. I try hard to keep my spirits up. What am I doing here?"***

In the last minute of the game we break away and score. Victory and a repeat of Mr Prole in attendance while I dress. This time the request is for me to play on Sunday. For the first team. Away to Shelbourne. At home. Sure, no problem. The League of Ireland is the Republic's premier competition. I am back in the big time. Just a minute. We're playing away? At home? Ah, we share the ground. The once famous old Drumcondra club has hit hard times. A glance at the league table on the way to the ground on the following Sunday shows them adrift at the bottom. And this is the last match of the season.

Nervously, I enter the visitors' dressing room. This being Dublin, everyone greets me warmly even though I have never seen any of them before. I am not surprised. Having attended evening training sessions I am sure there must be a first team elite doing serious business in the mornings. I am not even surprised when the kit is handed out and the keeper's jersey goes to Paddy Roche. No doubt the manager has changed his mind. I stand in the corner acting invisible.

The Drumcondra trainer pokes his head round the door. *"You won't learn anything in here, you eejit. Most of these fellers can't write let alone discuss tactics." "But you said we were away today." "Sure, don't we always use the home dressing room for away matches here,"* he says, stating the Irish obvious.

Back in the dressing room I recognise my colleagues and realise why we're at the bottom of the league. I try hard to keep my spirits up. What am I doing here?

On the pitch it's even worse. What pitch? Constant driving rain has reduced it to a lake. Or rather several lakes with connecting bogs. I can hardly get my boots out of the mud during the warm up. Warm up? My teeth are already chattering.

But the game has started. No time to panic because here comes a very large Shelbourne forward at full speed, propelling the ball through the water like a dolphin with no sign of a defender in his wake. They must have seen my style on Friday night.

I advance and spread myself as he shoots. Once again the ball cannons into me at point blank range. Only this time it strikes the most vulnerable spot known to man.

"Jaysus, what a day to gerrit in the goolies," says someone standing over me. I can't see him. I can't see anything. Blind with pain I writhe in the muddy goalmouth thinking this must be as bad as childbirth but it should be over sooner.

The trainer splashes out from the dugout and turns me over. *"Where you gerrit?"* Where did I get it? Is he blind? Has he never been to a football match before? Speech is almost impossible but eventually I manage to retch out the word. *"Testicles."*

His moon face comes into focus. Blank. *"Yer wha'?"* He has never heard the anatomical term before. A few more gasps and I manage to translate into the vernacular. Immediately he plunges his hands down the front of my shorts but I can feel nothing of this extraordinarily intimate service provided by an almost complete stranger. For the rest of the first half I have the unusual experience of being numb from the waist down.

This has its advantages. Above the waist I am suffering from exposure. The ceaseless, icy rain drives into my face. It is like standing in a cold shower with a wind machine going full blast. I shake uncontrollably. I want to go home.

But despite the conditions, old age, infirmity and the best efforts of the Drumcondra defence I somehow manage to keep a clean sheet till halfway through the second half. Then a desperate colleague gives away a penalty.

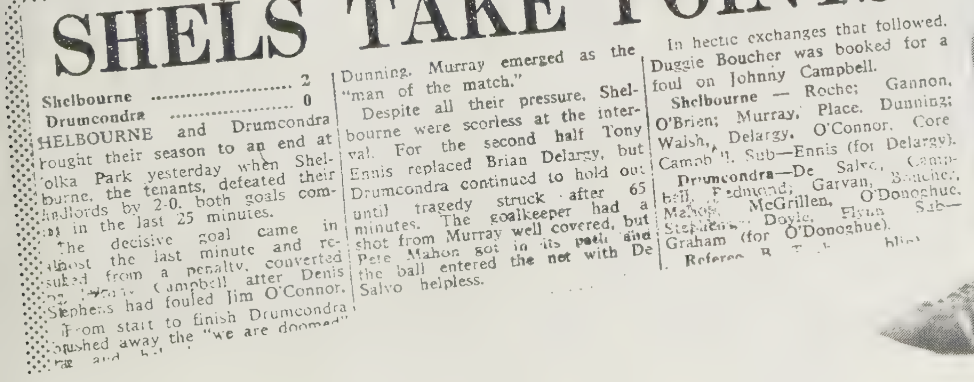
I am undaunted. I will psyche the kick taker. First macho talk. Then I throw mud at the ball from the edge of my six yard box. I am an education to the locals in the gentle art of gamesmanship. The referee orders me back to my line. Retreating, I still eyeball my opponent, unblinking. The whistle is blown and to my amazement a different player runs in and blasts the ball into the net. Oh, well, I wouldn't have saved it anyway.

Only ten minutes to go now. I am completely covered in thick mud. That must mean something. And there is some sign of life below the belt so I probably won't have to change the habits of an adult lifetime after all. Then a long range shot. A thunderbolt but I have it covered. I relish these. I shall pose horizontally in the air for a moment as I catch it at arms length. I shall make it look really difficult. Spectacular is the preferred word.

As I take off for this moment of glory the Drumcondra captain is flying through the air in the opposite direction. Before the ball can reach me it is dispatched like a mortar shell from his forehead into the opposite corner of the goal. When he picks himself up and walks away with studied indifference he spits immaculately. Impressed, I pick the ball out of the net. 2-0. Could be worse. I've let in eleven in my time.

After the game the manager forgets to pay my match fee but retains me for next season. Little does he know that I retired again after the first minute of the match. And maybe that was my mistake. If I'd stuck at it I might have been a contender for 'Irelly'. Mind you, I haven't got an Irish granny. But then, neither has Jack Charlton.

Brian de Salvo



SHELS TAKE POINTS

Shelbourne 2
Drumcondra 0

HELBOURNE and Drumcondra rought their season to an end at olka Park yesterday when Shelburne, the tenants, defeated their ndlords by 2-0. both goals com- in the last 25 minutes.

The decisive goal came in lmost the last minute and resulted from a penalty, converted [illegible] Campbell after Denis Stephens had fouled Jim O'Connor.

From start to finish Drumcondra pushed away the "we are doomed" [illegible]

Dunning. Murray emerged as the "man of the match."

Despite all their pressure, Shelbourne were scorless at the interval. For the second half Tony Ennis replaced Brian Delargy, but Drumcondra continued to hold out until tragedy struck after 65 minutes. The goalkeeper had a shot from Murray well covered, but Pete Mahon got in its path and the ball entered the net with De Salvo helpless.

In hectic exchanges that followed, Duggie Boucher was booked for a foul on Johnny Campbell.

Shelbourne — Roche; Gannon, O'Brien; Murray, Place, Dunning; Walsh, Delargy, O'Connor, Core Campbell. Sub—Ennis (for Delargy).

Drumcondra—De Salvo, Campbell, Redmond; Garvan, Boucher, Mahon, McGrillen, O'Donoghue, Stephens, Doyle, Flynn. Sub—Graham (for O'Donoghue).

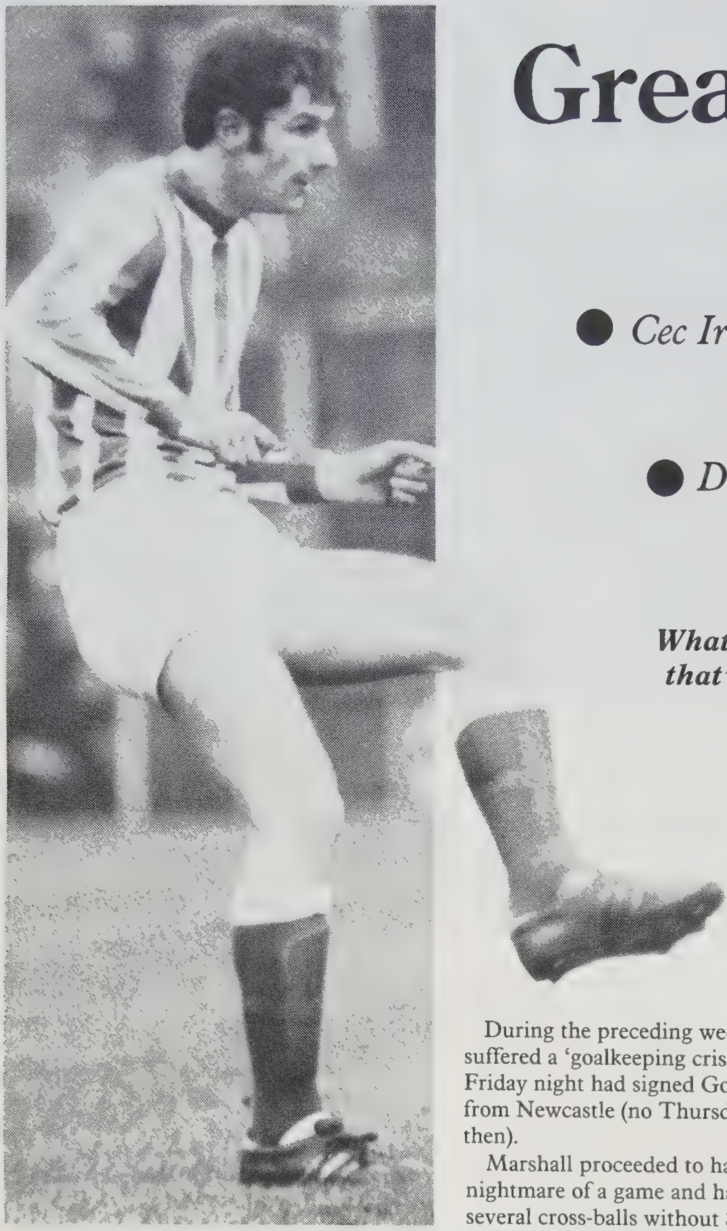
Referee [illegible]

Great Only Goals Of Our Time

● *Cec Irwin, Sunderland v Nottingham Forest*
12th October 1968.

● *Dick Malone, Sunderland v Portsmouth*
7th December 1974.

What do the above players have in common? Yes, that's right, they are both featured in the article below, ha ha.



Dick Malone

In the fifteen seasons from 1961-62 to 1975-76 Sunderland played 717 competitive first team matches. For 572 of these games the number two shirt was occupied by one of two men, Cec Irwin (312 appearances) and latterly Dick Malone (260 appearances). Between them they managed to score a princely total of three goals. But what goals. Irwin's only goal and the second of Malone's pair are part of Roker folklore, although for vastly different reasons.

Cec Irwin spent his entire League career at Sunderland, joining them straight from school in 1957 and leaving fifteen years later to go to Yeovil Town. Although gaining international recognition at Youth and Under-23 levels Cec could never be classed as a star player. His contribution to the team was summed up admirably in the pen-portraits of the time which described him as a *"reliable player"* and *"a stalwart."*

Irwin's goal was scored against Nottingham Forest in a First Division match on 12th October 1968, a game which will be remembered for probably the most inept display of goalkeeping ever seen at Roker Park.

During the preceding week Forest had suffered a 'goalkeeping crisis' and on the Friday night had signed Gordon Marshall from Newcastle (no Thursday 5pm deadline then).

Marshall proceeded to have an absolute nightmare of a game and had dropped several cross-balls without Sunderland being able to capitalise on them when, after thirty minutes, Cec Irwin floated in a centre from forty yards out. This was Cec's 249th appearance at right back for the club and just as he had never looked like scoring in the previous 248 so it was in this game. The centre was too near the goalkeeper for the incoming forwards, but was never an attempt at goal, at least until Marshall decided to change things. With the acute lack of timing that he had been displaying all afternoon, he dived too early and could only lie looking up in horror as the ball floated over his body and into the net.

It's difficult to know who was more stunned, Marshall, Irwin or the crowd. Cec was never as lucky again and his tally ended at one.

Dick Malone was from the same mould as Cec Irwin. He joined Sunderland from Ayr United having gained Scotland Under-23 honours. Another player who was a work horse rather than a thoroughbred. Malone's main claim to fame was being pinpointed by the press as the weak link in Sunderland's Cup final team, to be exploited by Leeds' 'potential match winner' Eddie Gray. Gray's ineffectiveness and eventual substitution, and Sunderland's victory, were the perfect answer to Dick's critics.

Malone scored his first goal for the club in only his 16th game, a thirty yard drive against Orient in April 1971. On the basis of this, supporters assumed that he would be good for two or three goals a season. But it was not to be. Although clumsy in the tackle, Malone was a skilful ball player (hence his nickname 'Tricky Dicky') and very fast on the overlap, becoming a great favourite with the crowd. He got himself into numerous scoring positions and it got to the stage where supporters were willing him to score. It finally happened after another three and a half years and 176 games. If ever a goal was worth waiting for, however, this was it. On 7th December 1974 against Portsmouth at Roker Park, with an hour gone and Sunderland leading 2-1, Dick received the ball just inside his own half. As an opponent came into tackle him he played a one-two with Kerr and was accelerating down the right wing. The opposing full back was next, but Dick nonchalantly pushed the ball to one side of him, ran around the other and continued on his merry way.

Into the Portsmouth penalty area and the goalie rushed out to close him down. Dick neatly pulled the ball wide of the keeper and just when everyone though that he had taken it too far he slotted it into the net from an acute angle.

The crowd went absolutely crackers. This was not just a goal, it was one of those magic moments football throws up once in a while, to be relived and savoured over the years. If Malone hadn't already received the freedom of the town as part of the Cup-winning side of 1973, he'd have been given it on the spot.

Dick never managed another goal in his remaining games for the club, but after that nobody cared. It would have been an anti-climax anyway.

Brian Greenlay

Brian Storm

May 1st 1990. Anfield. To my right, the Kop sways, staggers and sings. To my left, enough Derby supporters to fill their allocation of seats applaud politely, some leaving as they do, others staying and reflecting. At the side of the pitch stands Roy McFarland. He briefly consoles the young, honest, but defeated Derby players before hurrying them down the tunnel, thus denying them the chance to witness the collection of yet another pot by Liverpool. But, after all his players have disappeared, McFarland cannot resist a glance at the table in the centre circle, whereon stands the League Championship trophy itself. Before it is raised, McFarland is gone, but you can bet that in his heart, as in the hearts of the Rams fans present, burns the twin flames of envy and regret.

It is fanciful to ponder that had the young McFarland of Tranmere Rovers gone, as expected, to Anfield, then he might now be Liverpool's manager. But McFarland went to Derby because, so the story goes, his Dad was followed all the way home after one wet, Friday night game at Prenton Park. He was pursued even into the Gents at the ground, and when he arrived home, was forced to get young Roy out of bed. The relentless pursuer was, of course, one Brian Clough and, as was usual in those days, he got his man. Clough bought McFarland because he was the only good player left in Division 4. McFarland went to Derby because he was too knackered to think straight.

This is just one of the many stories that abound about how Clough built his team at Derby. The energy, arrogance, and sheer *chutzpah* of the man set a drab East Midland town afire — so much so that when he resigned in 1973, local businessmen complained that, unless he returned, their trade would be permanently damaged.

> ***"Sam Longson, the Havana cigar who acted as Derby's Chairman, decided that Clough should either give up his media commitments, or go. Clough went."***

The facts are as follows: Clough took charge of Derby, a run-of-the-mill Division 2 side, in the late '60s. By 1969 he had rebuilt the team and won the Second Division Championship. A year later they finished 4th in the League and two years later won the bugger (after a night when Leeds needed a draw at Wolves and lost and Liverpool needed to win at Arsenal and drew). Twelve months after that, they reached the European Cup Semi-Finals, where they were beaten by dodgy old Juventus. Then, before we could even begin to say 'Brian Glanville', Clough was gone. Sam Longson, the Havana cigar who acted as Derby's Chairman, decided that Clough should either give up his media commitments, or go. Clough went.

Wild days followed. Letters were written, a pro-Clough supporters' association was set up, a players' strike was mooted. When the great man appeared in the stand before a home game hysteria set in, but on the night when England failed to reach the World Cup Finals and a certain Polish keeper took the name of 'Clown', I understood two things: 1. Clough would not return and 2. Even great men can talk bollocks. I went to bed and wept.

And what of a Derby supporter's feelings since? Well, it didn't hurt so much after a while. Dave Mackay replaced some of the team's honesty with breath-taking style and won another Championship. It didn't matter that Clough was doing nothing at Brighton, or making a fool of himself at Leeds, but when Derby's decline set in, coinciding with things turning round at Forest, when the sins of the Chairman began to be visited upon the club, the pain and regret throbbed like a particularly nasty migraine.

Views on Clough appear to have polarised in the meantime. There are those, including myself, who believe him to be the genius who got away; while others see him as nothing more than a traitor. (An old friend of mine, on his wedding day, bumped into Clough in the toilets of the reception hotel. Our Brian offered his hand and words of congratulations to the groom. My friend offered a few words of abuse in return.)

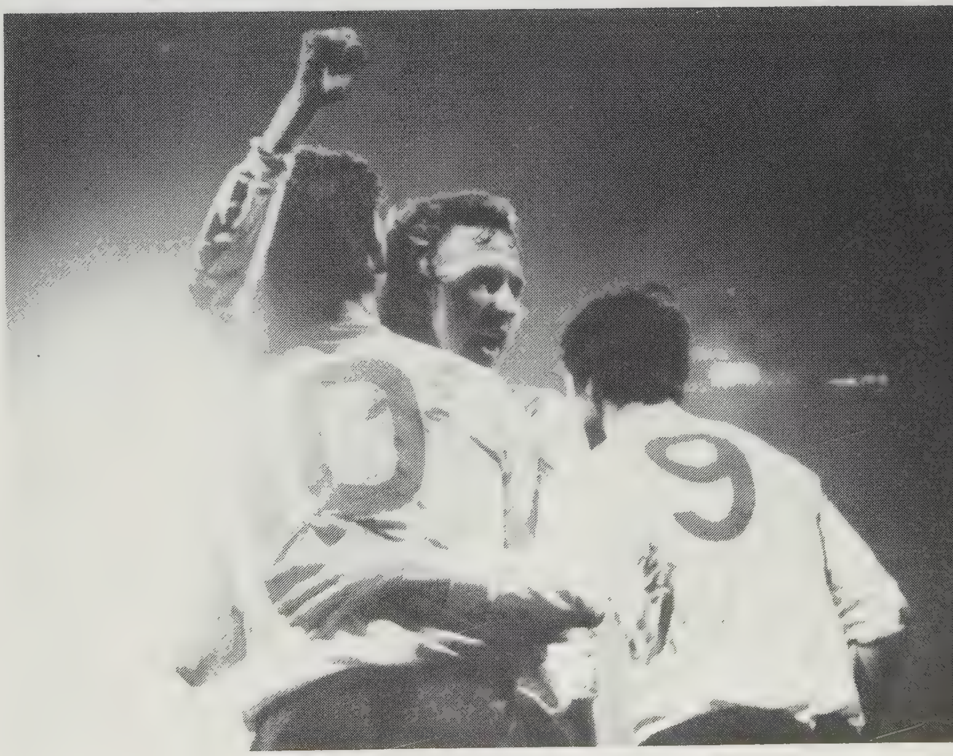
The near Second Coming in 1977 seems to confirm both views. Had he not been a Derby man at heart, he would not have even considered the offer. On the other hand, if he had genuinely cared for the club, why did he drive back to Nottingham that day?

The fact is that he still lives in Derby and every Rams fan knows a bloke, who knows a bloke, who heard Clough tell that he considers his Derby team to be the best he ever built. Most of us believe it.

Brian Clough's management career is coming to a close and we can only dream about how great Derby's achievements might have been had he never left. When he arrived at the Baseball Ground, Clough said that the ghosts of the 1946 Cup-winning side still haunted the place and he set about exorcising them. The problem is that the ghost of Clough remains. Even Arthur Cox, who has achieved remarkable things, has not removed it. He must know that as well as every Derby supporter.

Those of us at Anfield on May 1st went for a good night out and almost got one. But, every time, a trip to Liverpool is a mission impossible and every time Alan Hansen lifts another Championship trophy, we can only feel envy and regret. The envy is common to all non-Liverpool supporters, but the regret at what might have been is particularly deep at Derby...if only Cloughie *had*....

Alistair Hewitt



Gateshead 1

Well, what did you do during the War? Eric Foster sensibly spent his time watching football....

I am told that I attended my first football match at the tender age of four. I sat in the directors' box at Ayresome Park as Middlesbrough played Aston Villa. My mentor was George Camsell, who plied me with bars of chocolate and assorted comics. To the intense disgust of my father, I spent the whole ninety minutes reading comics and gorging myself (nowadays I eschew

Adolf Hitler 0

chocolate and the only comics I look at wear red and white stripes and appear at the Victoria Ground, Stoke).

Many years later my father tried again to interest his only son in professional football. In November 1941, I was persuaded to visit St James' Park, Newcastle for the game against York City. The game ended 3-3 but it was the beginning of a love affair with football that is only now starting to grow a little stale. (I now think twice when invited to watch Grimsby Reserves play Burnley Reserves — before going).

I have been to well over 2,500 football matches but the memories of my earliest wartime games are still among my happiest. There was, of course, no league or cup programme as we know it. Teams were divided into regions as travelling was not only difficult but not in the best interests of the war effort. Arsenal and Aston Villa were names from a different world and era. Instead there was a steady diet of local derbies and visits from what then seemed to be outposts of the British Empire — Leeds, York, the two Bradford teams. Travelling supporters were virtually unknown; it was like being at Luton every week except that it was enjoyable.

Apart from our visitors from the deep south of Yorkshire there was Sunderland and Middlesbrough, Hartlepool United and Darlington, and those exotic neighbours from south of the Tyne, Gateshead. It was a restricted diet but as there were no outstanding teams and no wallflowers either, each new game was an exciting challenge. This came about largely because of the 'guest' players who turned out from week to week. Each side contained a small nucleus of home grown players who were available regularly either because they were considered unfit for war service, or had vital home jobs, or just happened to be stationed conveniently near the football ground. The rest of the team consisted of men who were temporarily in the area en route to internal or overseas postings and there was no tedious registration business to get through.

> ***"Travelling supporters were virtually unknown; it was like being at Luton every week except that it was enjoyable."***

Not only were the teams visiting St James' Park very familiar, so were the referees. Very early on in my days as a spectator I came to recognise the various characteristics of each. Even today when I buy programmes my first instinct is to see who the referee is, for the lesson I learnt long, long ago still applies — no matter what the teams, very often it is the man in black who is the difference between an exciting non-controversial game and a real pigs' breakfast of a contest.

Mr Hartles of York (I'm sure it should be pronounced heartless) was a humourless disciplinarian who must have been a sergeant major at some time in his life. Mr Leuty of Leeds was a charmer — a great friend of the Seymours of Newcastle, he would often arrive with a big bunch of flowers for the Chairman's wife — and it was always roses all the way for Newcastle United when he refereed. So it was with Mr Meadows of Redcar, an out-and-out Newcastle fan. Once we had a stranger in charge — a man who'd refereed a Cup Final, Mr Holdcroft of Preston. This was a new experience — it was like watching Sir Malcolm Sergeant conducting after months of Malcolm MacDonald.

I was greatly saddened when Gateshead were shamefully betrayed by their fellow members and were thrown out of the League the very first time they were forced to apply for re-election. During the war I came to relish their frequent visits to St James' Park, and Redheugh (pronounced Red-yuff) Park, their own ground, was the first 'foreign' stadium I ever visited (apart from that one-off trip to Middlesbrough in my romper days). They had a good no-nonsense side with two excellent football brothers Tommy and Jacky Callender, 'Cec' MacCormack, who later scored umpteen goals for Notts County, a deep thinking inside-forward called 'Tucker' Johnson, and an amazing fellow at left back, their captain Gus Livingstone.

"His head was always inclined to one side as though he had a permanent stiff neck — in fact he did have a permanent stiff neck."

He was of a breed you don't see today; a rugged tackler, a good clean kicker of the ball with a left boot that was welded on to his foot. But Livingstone had one marked physical disability. His head was always inclined to one side as though he had a permanent stiff neck — in fact he did have a permanent stiff neck. He headed the ball powerfully and accurately but I could only marvel at the fact that he could head it at all — and remember the wartime football was often like a medicine ball soaked in water, not the plastic balloon of today. I think of dear old Gus every time I watch Gladstone Small bowling for England.

One Saturday my father informed me that Newcastle were to have a special guest player, a gentleman from some outlandish team called Preston North End, and that this lad was something special. Gateshead were the visitors and so I looked forward with relish to the demolition of a team who were not so much neighbours as sitting tenants. Tom Finney against Gus Livingstone. The auguries were good. Newcastle scored in the first few minutes. But Gateshead wouldn't lie down, and inspired by Tucker Johnson and Cec MacCormack were leading 3-1 at half time. During the interval Newcastle boss Stan Seymour had a few words to say. *"Give the ball to Finney."* In the second half Newcastle did just that and I was treated with a few thousand others to an awe-inspiring display of wing play. After 90 minutes the score was 7-4 to Newcastle and that included a Tom Finney hat-trick.

As the players left the stadium some thirty minutes later someone spotted Gus Livingstone walking down the steps carrying his boots. *"What was it like against Finney?"* He was asked. The battle-weary Gateshead captain simply pointed to his shoulder *"Haven't you noticed?"* he said. *"Before the match my head was on the other side."*

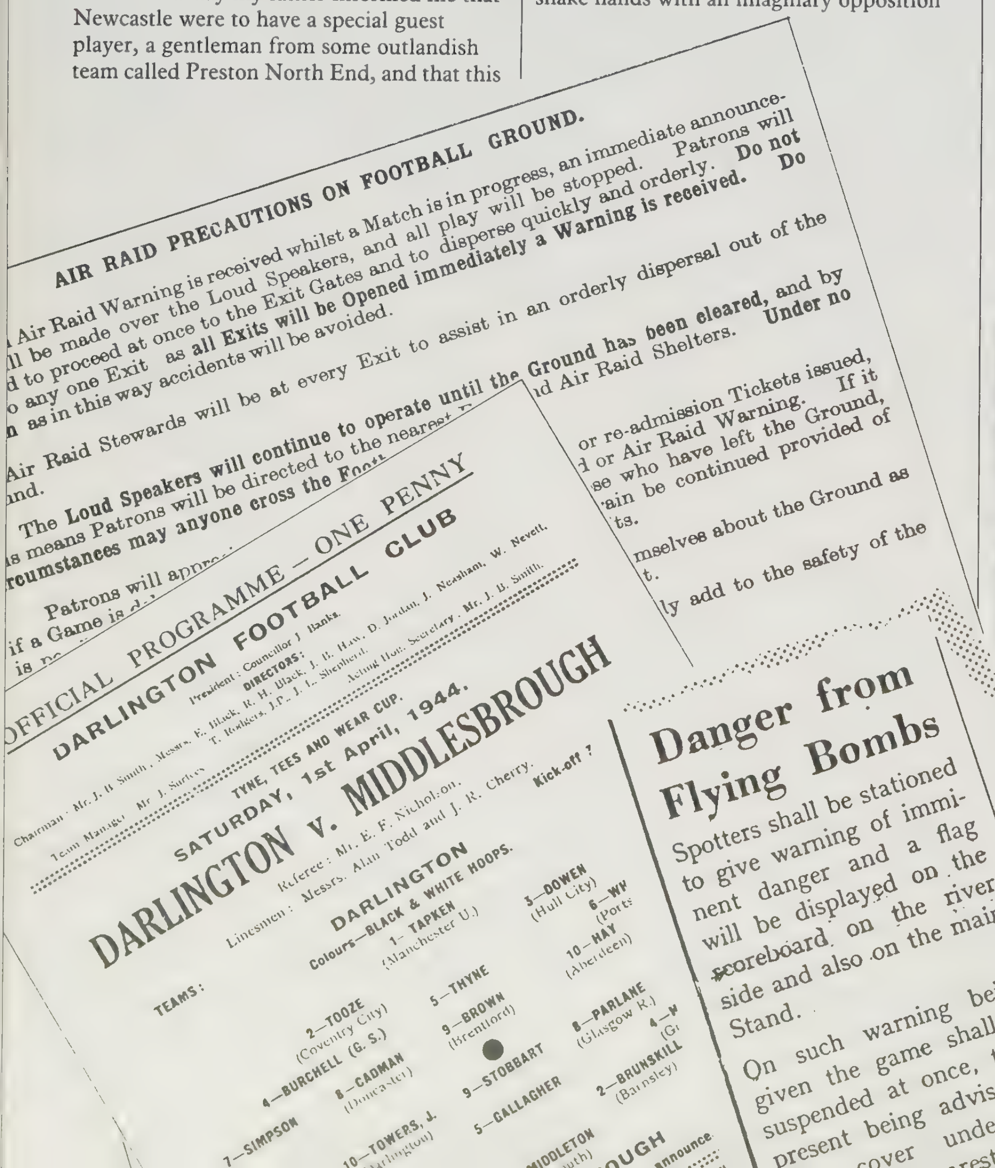
There was one other attraction at Gateshead — Albert. At half-time, it was then customary for the referee to leave the ball in the centre circle. This was the signal for the appearance of a rolling apparition wearing a huge flapping overcoat, a cloth cap on his head and a cigarette dangling from the corner of his mouth. Everyone knew him as Albert.

He would sway into the centre circle, shake hands with an imaginary opposition captain, spin an imaginary coin and then set off to dribble down the field. His intricate footwork and body swerves had everyone almost crying with laughter. Slowly he bore down on goal. Then, once inside the penalty area came the perfect pratfall. Picking himself up, he carefully placed the ball on the penalty spot before rolling it into the net at about three miles an hour. Lawrie McMenemy (whose memories also include Albert) claims that this feat was timed to coincide with the arrival of the teams at the end of the interval in order to gain the maximum cheers. Not so. The Gateshead team timed its arrival so it could share in the ovation Albert was receiving.

In order to boost morale, a representative match was arranged at St James' Park, Scotland v the RAF. My football-wise father told me, *"Now you're going to see football as it should be played. The Scots are the best players in the world."* I believed him. After all, apart from Sunderland and Blackburn Rovers he had also played for Morton. I turned up early for this big match on a dark, damp Winter's day. There was some doubt as to whether it would take place as a horrid fog hung everywhere. There were, of course, no floodlights, and the kick off was at 2 o'clock. But the fog lifted sufficiently for the referee to give the go-ahead.

I'd never seen such a crowd. And there was a kilted bag-pipe band in attendance. I can't recall the names of all the players but in goal for Scotland was the (then) legendary Jerry Dawson. Behind the scenes was another scare. The RAF players were assembled from all points of the compass. They were due to meet at the Station Hotel at noon for lunch, but at 12 o'clock only four had put in an appearance. However, by 1.30 the last of the team arrived at the Newcastle ground, several taxis disgorging their occupants. There was just time for them to be introduced to one another then the teams took to the field. I goggled at the 'Chinaman' Frank Soo of Stoke, and his peerless

Frank Soo



AIR RAID PRECAUTIONS ON FOOTBALL GROUND.

Air Raid Warning is received whilst a Match is in progress, an immediate announce-
ll be made over the Loud Speakers, and all play will be stopped. Patrons will
d to proceed at once to the Exit Gates and to disperse quickly and orderly. **Do not**
o any one Exit as **all Exits will be Opened immediately a Warning is received. Do**
n as in this way accidents will be avoided.

Air Raid Stewards will be at every Exit to assist in an orderly dispersal out of the
und.

The **Loud Speakers will continue to operate until the Ground has been cleared,** and by
s means Patrons will be directed to the nearest … d Air Raid Shelters. **Under no**
rcumstances may anyone cross the Foot…

Patrons will appr…
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OFFICIAL PROGRAMME — ONE PENNY

DARLINGTON FOOTBALL CLUB

President: Councillor J. Banks.
DIRECTORS:
Chairman: Mr. J. B. Smith, Messrs. E. Black, R. H. Black, J. B. Haw, D. Jordan, J. Nesham, W. Nevett, T. Rodgers, J.P., J. L. Shepherd.
Team Manager: Mr. J. Surtees. Acting Hon. Secretary: Mr. J. B. Smith.

TYNE, TEES AND WEAR CUP.

SATURDAY, 1st April, 1944.

DARLINGTON V. MIDDLESBROUGH

Referee: Mr. E. F. Nicholson.
Linesmen: Messrs. Alan Todd and J. R. Cherry.
Kick-off ?

TEAMS:

DARLINGTON
Colours—BLACK & WHITE HOOPS.

1—TAPKEN (Manchester U.)
2—TOOZE (Coventry City)
3—DOWEN (Hull City)
4—BURCHELL (G. S.)
5—THYNE
6—W… (Ports…
7—SIMPSON
8—CADMAN (Doncaster)
9—BROWN (Brentford)
10—TOWERS, J. (Darlington)
10—HAY (Aberdeen)

9—STOBBART
8—PARLANE (Glasgow R.)
5—GALLAGHER
4—… (G…
2—BRUNSKILL (Barnsley)
…MIDDLETON
…OUGH
Announce…

Danger from Flying Bombs

Spotters shall be stationed to give warning of imminent danger and a flag will be displayed on the scoreboard on the river side and also on the main Stand.

On such warning being given the game shall be suspended at once, those present being advised to … cover under the … rest availclubmate Neil Franklin. I awaited their demolition by the masterful Scots. Ninety minutes later the RAF had run out winners by four goals to nil following a breathtaking display of what could only be described as instinctive football. It was impossible to believe these players, who found each other as if by telepathy, had only just been introduced. I always thought of that game whenever I saw a hang-dog expression on Bobby Robson's face as he deplored the fact he could not get his squad together for at least seven weeks before tackling Cyprus at Wembley.

But back to the league.

Of course having guest players had its lighter moments. Sometimes players arrived at the ground on a Saturday only to find someone else had been asked to report for the same position. Once I arrived at Redheugh Park (I used to walk the five miles from my home) at exactly the same time as two goalkeepers, Ted Dawson and Ronnie Gray, both of whom insisted they were playing for Gateshead. Gateshead's 'supremo', a gentleman called Tulip, decided the selection by spinning a coin. Dawson won the toss but I've often thought afterwards that if the opposition had been a goalkeeper short Ron Gray would have played for them and no one would have minded. In that chaotic atmosphere of postings and cancelled leaves it was inevitable that sometimes a man would turn up out of the blue, announce he was a player with some club in the distant Midlands or South, and on the strength of his assertion would be considered for selection.

One such incident occurred when Newcastle met Leeds in a local cup competition. Included in the Newcastle side was a Mr Stuart Diamond, who claimed he was on the books of Manchester United. As Newcastle were short of players that particular weekend, Mr Diamond led the attack.

As soon as the players took the field one could sense something was wrong. Diamond was built as no other centre forward who has ever played. He hadn't so much a waistline as a plimsoll line. And we knew something was wrong when Newcastle kicked off — he needed two attempts to roll the ball to his inside right. As the game progressed it became embarrassing. It was for all the world as if a Sunday parks player had just wandered on to the field after consuming six pints of beer. Despite this handicap, Newcastle went into a three-goal lead and just before half-time the unbelievable happened. Following a furious scramble the ball hit the bar and dropped virtually on the line. Only one player was remotely near it — Mr Diamond. He swung his right foot and played a shot Steve Davis would have admired. The ball went at an angle of ninety degrees, hit one post, rolled along the line, hit the other post, then apologetically crawled into the goal. The centre forward had scored.

Many who weren't yet born in the 1940s keep telling me that goalkeeping standards were much lower then. I'm not so sure. Perhaps they are thinking of the Blackpool v Bolton final where, for me, the abiding memory is not of Stanley Matthews but of a cruelly-hit Bolton side beaten because their goalkeeper Hanson was even worse than Blackpool's Farm. But as today's goalkeepers all wear huge mechanical shovels on the ends of their arms and a well aimed fart can turn a shot over the bar, I reserve judgement. It was certainly the case, though, that there were tremendous differences in standards among wartime goalkeepers. The side which had an experienced professional between the posts had a head start on the opposition. One game stands out in my memory. Newcastle were at home to Leeds — again. Both sides had rickety defences but both also had a number of excellent forwards. The result was a furious end-to-end game with hardly a hint of defensive football. At the end, the whole stand rose in tribute to the undoubted Man Of The Match, Newcastle goalkeeper Jimmy Rutherford. He trudged off covered in mud from head to foot. Nothing remarkable in that except the scoreline. Newcastle had won 9-0. Shot after shot had been blocked by the inspired Rutherford. At the other end was a roly-poly keeper called Daniel (a gift for the headline writers). Shots rained on him and were rarely repelled. The ball went through his arms, through his hands, between his legs and once, I swear, through his navel. The goalkeepers were the main difference between the sides. The following week Newcastle visited Leeds: during the war this was the way the fixture list was drawn up. Jimmy Rutherford could not get leave so his place in the Newcastle goal went to a local, callow youth. Leeds won 7-2.

Tom Finney

York City had a famous guest goalkeeper, Sam Bartram of Charlton Athletic. A gorilla of a man with bright red hair, he was always a great attraction. He featured in a remarkable game. York were awarded a penalty and goalkeeper Bartram was their penalty ace. Someone placed the ball on the spot, Bartram trotted up, broke into a run then — whack! The ball hit the bar, rebounded over his head and landed outside the penalty area. Newcastle pressed forward as the York goalkeeper raced back to take his position. Too late. The ball arrived first and a defender handled. Penalty. The Newcastle marksman Albert Stubbins stepped up and — whack. The ball again hit the bar and now it was York's turn to counter-attack. Straight up the field they went and got — another penalty. This time Bartram stayed at home. The new penalty taker shot hard at goal but goalkeeper Rutherford turned the ball on to the bar. This time, however, the rebound fell at the penalty-taker's feet and York had scored. Three penalties in two minutes, all of which hit the bar. Those were the days!

As war weariness enveloped the nation it was essential that there was something to play for on a Saturday. So in addition to the various section championships in the League a number of cup competitions were concocted. One such was the Tyne-Wear-Tees Cup, which I think ran for only one season. The two-legged final was between Darlington and Newcastle. Darlington, close to the huge army camp at Catterick, always had a pool of talent to draw upon. They were at home in the first leg, which Newcastle won by the odd goal. The return should have been a formality but Darlington scored the only goal. After thirty minutes extra time the scores remained unchanged. Another thirty minutes and still no goal. So it was decided to play on until a deciding goal was scored. The game kicked off at 3pm. At ten past six, a long ball landed at Jackie Milburn's feet. A mere twenty-five yards offside, he looked very sheepish. The linesman was about to raise his flag but the referee looked at him, shook his head and shouted *"Play on"*. A rather embarrassed Milburn rolled the ball into goal and immediately the whole Darlington team turned and ran — not at the referee or linesman but straight down the players' tunnel. The last train to camp left at 6.45pm and the team daren't be AWOL. The Newcastle players weren't far behind them and I don't believe the cup was ever presented.

All this happened nearly half a century ago. Since then I've seen Newcastle's three Wembley triumphs in five years, Stanley Matthews, Pele, the Hungarians at Wembley in 1953, George Best, Denis Law, Bobby Charlton, Maradona, Paul Dyson and George Berry. But when I grow too old to do anything else but dream, those won't be my fondest memories. No, I shall still think gratefully of those crazy, chaotic, heart-warming games of wartime football. I won't recall the dashing Gary Lineker sprinting away from an offside trap that failed: instead it will be the immortal Albert Stubbins of Newcastle United, winging like an arrow through a crumbling defence, a glorious black and white arrow with a golden head. And another Albert, swaying down the field at Gateshead, cheered on by a crowd which included one solitary, laughing policeman.

Eric Foster

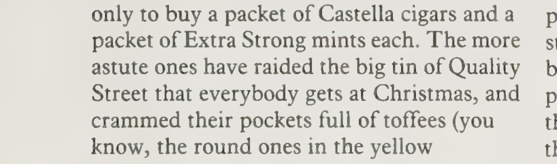
BAD TIDINGS

There are many irritating things about the Christmas and New Year period. One is the vast expense involved in sending Yuletide greetings to people you don't really like. Another is the difficulty in getting served in your local pub on Christmas and New Year's Eve. Most irritating of all, though, is the fact that our favourite footer team play a home game on either New Year's or Boxing Day. Coming from die-hard supporters of a mediocre Fourth Division outfit, that might sound strange, but bear with us and we'll explain. It's something that football fans everywhere are familiar with, especially those who watch lower division sides and are used to vast open spaces on the terracing for most games.

It seems that for some people the dates 'December 26th' and 'January 1st' magically trigger off the memory that the town or city in which they live has a professional football team. Once the mind has been activated, the body goes into action. It scans the sports pages of the local newspaper to see on which of the above dates the team is playing at home. It then rifles through its wardrobe for a long unused and moth-eaten scarf. Since the scarf was last worn, the team have changed their strip a couple of times. However, since they're back to their original colours the scarf now has a current look to it.

Suitably attired, the body then rings its mates and, as in those dim and distant days when visits to the football ground were more regular, it asks *"Going to the match, then?"* On the other end of the telephone there is a stunned silence. It's been such a long time since those immortal words were heard that they seem to have lost all meaning. But in an instant the neural network is reactivated and the reply, *"Yeah, why not, it's Christmas/New Year."* (Delete as applicable).

A few phone calls later and there are enough of them to comfortably fill a Vauxhall Cavalier. They set off, stopping only to buy a packet of Castella cigars and a packet of Extra Strong mints each. The more astute ones have raided the big tin of Quality Street that everybody gets at Christmas, and crammed their pockets full of toffees (you know, the round ones in the yellow wrapper). The ones that aren't driving have secreted a hip flask in the pocket of their Les Bence-style simulated fur jackets. All are wearing a hat of some description, the most popular being a brightly coloured tam-o-shanter or a pom-pom hat which has long since lost its pom-pom. Though their ages vary, most are in their mid-forties and reek of Brut aftershave (another festive gift).



When they get to the ground they are able to stand or sit wherever they like. Inevitably, they choose to position themselves behind *us* in the part of the stadium we've stood in for the last twenty years. In taking their place they barge their way past more frequent watchers of the team without even the hint of an apology. Once ensconced, the conversation begins. It will last from 2.45 to 4.45 and will cover just about everything from 'the bird' in the typing pool with the big knockers to the cost of replacing a starter motor on a shagged out Austin Maxi. The only conversation that won't take place is that which has football as its theme.

The referee's whistle signals the start of the 'pass the toffees and mints around' part of the afternoon's entertainment. Like a collection of Mick Channons, arms fly in all directions as Jeff gives a mint to Barry, who passes it on to Charlie. Charlie then knocks a stick of chewing gum to Don, who refuses because he's smoking a cigar of Churchillian proportions. The passing is more intricate than we'll ever see on the field of play, and the use of elbow when extracting mints from the pocket would put Mark Dennis to shame.

After five minutes, one of them pretends he's Brian Moore and starts a running commentary. The only problem is that he has no idea who half the side are. Only the veterans are recognisable to our friend, the rest of the team having only been signed at the beginning of the season. The commentary has the added bonus of being punctuated with profanities. More disturbingly, it becomes increasingly racist. It is as though the visit to the ground is releasing, in some cathartic way, a whole year's worth of pent-up emotions. The opportunity to 'compliment' the players on their inability to hit the target or pass accurately to one another is seized on with gusto.

By half-time the consensus is that it's just as crap as it was the last time they were here, and they ask one another whether it was worth coming after all. During half-time, they take it in turns to empty their bladders with the result that in the ten minute interval the rest of us are constantly buffeted and end up wearing, rather than drinking, our cups of Bovril.

As the second half gets underway another intricate pattern of mint and toffee passing begins. With the score on the field 2-1 in our side's favour, a soft goal is conceded and the opposition are level again. Our friends cheer and laugh at the lack of communication in the defence almost as much as the opposition's supporters cheer for their team's goal. Following a period of sustained pressure, we find ourselves 4-2 up and looking for a fifth. Our centre forward's superb header has numbed our friends into silence. Suddenly, there's nothing left to jeer at and no one left to take the piss out of. Sensing a home team victory our friends decide to leave *en masse* with a good five minutes of the game remaining. The fact that we're winning seems to have spoiled their afternoon's enjoyment.

As they leave, one of our number asks if they'll be here for the next match. The reply is short and curt. *"No f****** chance."* We breathe a collective sigh of relief. See you next New Year's Day, gentlemen?

Rob McIlveen & Ray Douglas

Cumberland GAP

As Carlisle United stumbled into the 1970s, the team's constant Second Division mid-table position, 9,000 gate and profitable outside entertainments department often brought about rumours that they didn't really want to get into the top flight. Success in the League Cup had brought lucrative fixtures with numerous First Division sides who were *"surprisingly"* beaten by Carlisle — mainly due to the bizarre floodlighting system which only partially brightened the pitch for night games. Imagine our disgust when, during the infamous power cuts and the three-day week, we had to play Liverpool in mid-afternoon. Of course, we lost. Allowing the visitors to see the ball was always a mistake.

> ***"No longer did kids at school claim to support Man Utd or Liverpool, it was Carlisle all the way."***

Carlisle United did possess some masterful players in the lead-up to the unbelievable season when they actually managed to gain promotion in 1974. They had the cool head of Chris Balderstone, a veteran Yorkshireman who played cricket during the Summer and even padded up for England for one long, laborious test match. Opening the batting with Geoff Boycott was a fiasco of Biblical proportions. Both players were determined to stay in and play it slow. Balderstone was out for 30 something after a mere seven hours. Then there was Hugh McIlmoyle, a prolific goalscorer and Stan Webb, who was heralded as a super sub and, indeed, managed to score numerous goals for the team. Unfortunately, the crowd was unimpressed by his pudding bowl haircut and Prince Charles-appointed ears. But Webb is the only man I've ever seen score two goals in one game, one with his nose and one with his bottom.

There had been no surprises during the 1972-73 campaign. Carlisle finished mid-table, parted company with the quality players who had kept us there and bought several new ones. Brunton Park's supply of sticky stout and tepid meat pies (supplied by my Dad, no less) were well in evidence. The legendary joke about the only good thing to come out of Carlisle being the M6 was well intact, but little did we know. In those days, Carlisle were seldom beaten at Brunton Park — frequently it was suggested that the long journey for rival teams and the poor health of the motorway were responsible — but, for some reason, the team started winning away and scoring goals. Even more puzzling was an entertaining flair which seemed to explode in Carlisle's previously unrecognisable wide play.

The new players had poise and they mixed well with the established heads to create a veritable footballing machine. No longer did kids at school claim to support Man Utd or Liverpool, it was Carlisle all the way. So excited were the locals that gates shot up astronomically by mid-season to get into five figures. They were actually playing as a team rather than for themselves. Some of them would even pass the ball.

Goalkeeper Alan Ross, seemingly always on the verge of playing for Scotland without actually getting into the squad, was having a great season and the defence was now marshalled by the lanky, broad shoulders of Graham Winstanley. The thin-but-aggressive Bobby Parker was in charge just in front of the back four and alongside Parker, but inevitably running all over the shop like a man overdosed on Lucozade, was half-pint-sized Ray Train. Train was possibly the first player that the club's Warwick Road End, and especially the gaggle from our school, recognised as a 'midfield player'. Train was a revelation, and many a school dinner-time was spent discussing the finer merits of his untapped energy.

Playing up front were two men capable of drinking anyone under the table, Joe Laidlaw and Bobby Owen. At opposite poles of the girth spectrum, Laidlaw was a tubby who waddled from wing to wing and managed to score a bag full into the bargain, while Owen was a wispy wizard who managed to run in strange spirals from one side of the pitch to the other.

The season built to a stunning climax with positive reports throughout the press — well, the *Cumberland News*, anyway. Carlisle could clinch promotion by winning at Blackpool at the Easter weekend. So exuberant were the United fans that a 200 mile round trip to Blackpool seemed like nothing. And, in blazing sunshine, we were sure that the glory days would be ours by 4.40.

The sight of grown men, with knotted handkerchiefs on their heads, drowning their sorrows following the 4-0 thumping was pathetic. The season was going to go right to the last game against Aston Villa. Carlisle had to win, while we hoped that Orient would drop a point in one of their last two games, ensuring that the Blues would gain promotion in the third slot.

Carlisle performed poetically in reaching, perhaps, their greatest form ever. They won the game majestically 2-1. But the pitch invasion, and realisation that *"turf is dead soft"* was rather spoilt by Orient winning. The season would last until the following Friday when, ironically, Orient played Villa at home. Some Carlisle fans travelled down but one of our number had, quite bizarrely, decided to get engaged that very night. As we huddled round a radio a floor below the party — where girls in frocks looked on disgruntled at the stranglehold that football had over men of the Northern persuasion — ecstatic cheers greeted Villa's opening goal. The tension returned as Orient equalised, but the party swung into action as the final whistle blew and Carlisle were promoted.

The city erupted. Shandies were drunk without lemonade. The party can-canned down to a nearby roundabout that housed a fountain, but it was bone dry. Still, they'd made it and, in retrospect, they certainly deserved it.

For a fleeting moment, after three victories in the First Division, Carlisle United topped the League. We thought we could conquer the universe. We were ready to take on Brazil. But, as the season progressed, the team disintegrated. In the close season they'd become local celebrities. The players were out clubbing it, surrounded by girls, loving every minute of it. Worse still, they were *our* girls. By mid-season it was virtually over. Players came and went and the slide down to Division Two was inevitable. Subsequent seasons saw them in the Third and now the Fourth. The magic had gone. The crowds, like the prospect of employment in Carlisle, evaporated.

For a few fleeting moments, Carlisle had the world tied to their bootlaces. For all we knew, they invented the concept of a midfield. They played out of their skins. But there's a moral here. They should never have got new floodlights when they were promoted. And just refused to play in daylight.

Dave Henderson

Chris Balderstone

The Basques are a pretty mysterious lot. Nobody seems to know who they are and where they came from. They have a different blood group distribution from the rest of Europe and their language is so complex and strange that it can best be described as out to lunch. Since the mid-Seventies, they have been granted much more autonomy, and the majority of the peaceable population is non-secessionist, turning its back on ETA's violent methods.

Of the three main centres, Bilbao, Vitoria and San Sebastian, it is to the latter that one would most readily return. Tucked up into the North-Eastern coastline of Spain, San Sebastian would long ago have succumbed to Union Jack shorts and diced carrots in its gutters had it not been for the rain and the consequent lack of interest shown by British travel companies. As it is, the more discerning traveller can enjoy its chic beaches, its proliferation of bars, its amazing food, its surprisingly friendly natives and the odd day when it doesn't monsoon. There's even a pretty decent football team called Real Sociedad whose current centre forward just happens to be John Aldridge and whose previous manager just happened to be John Toshack. Big Tosh is now walking taller than ever through the streets of Madrid even if his new Real didn't win the European Cup, but his heart, according to the Secretary of Real Sociedad, *"es todavia con nositros"* (is still with us).

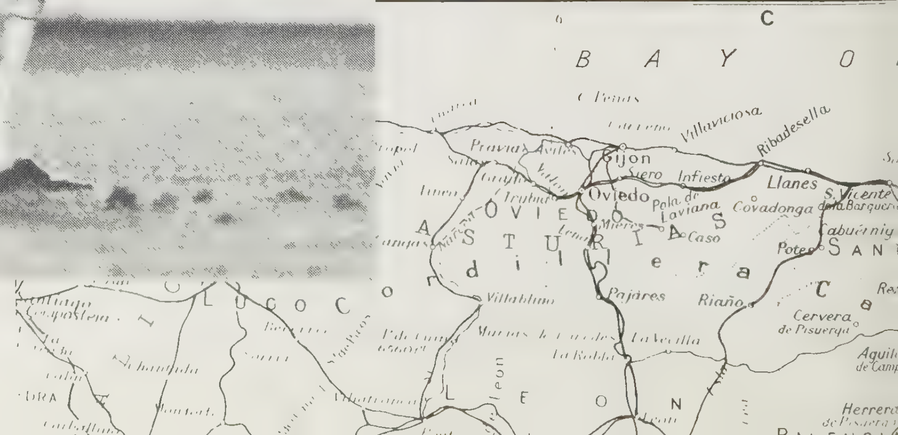
> ***"...San Sebastian would long ago have succumbed to Union Jack shorts and diced carrots in its gutters had it not been for the rain and the consequent lack of interest shown by British travel companies."***

This might seem a bit like wishful thinking, but there could be some truth in it. The night before Toshack left for Madrid last year I saw him walking alone at midnight in the dark along La Concha, a promenade that stretches the length of the bay here — and he looked decidedly wistful. Closing time is around dawn, so although there was nothing strange about his being out for walkies I nevertheless recall wondering why he wasn't at home packing his toothbrush. The answer was obviously that he wanted to take one last look at his adopted city before he left for the bustle of the capital the next day, as well as working out the annual interest on his new salary.

He was taking some stick in the local press at the time for having sold out to the enemy, as one paper put it, *"Para un punete de dolares"* (for a fistful of dollars), but there seems to be no ill-will nowadays. Indeed he recently bought a house by the beach in Zarautz, just outside San Sebastian, and regularly comes back up for long weekends. The history of Real Sociedad has been largely one of losing their stars to the big boys further south, and they have naturally developed a fairly philosophical attitude over the years. Yet one senses that there is something different about the way in which the team is supported and run, something deliberately parochial. San Sebastian liked Toshack not simply because he won them the Spanish Cup, but because he was Welsh. It was never stated, but it was almost as though they could identify more easily with a man who they assumed was from a minority culture, a culture whose true political rights had been constantly denied by a centralised alien government. The same goes for Aldridge. The supporters of Real are far more interested in Eire's chances in Italy than they are of Spain's likely progress. Spain to them is a foreign land. To travel south is to go to Spain, a different country with a different language.

The traditional whine in the British tabloid press that 'Politics and sport should not mix' wouldn't cut much ice here. Sport *is* politics. Real Madrid are the enemy in more senses than one, despised much more than regional rivals Atletico Bilbao. Madrid can never be forgiven for its association with General Franco and all that his regime meant for the culturally independent regions. The Catalan and Basque languages were both officially banned during his lifetime, when even to speak in these tongues was viewed as a suspicious act. Since 21,000 Basques died in Franco's attempt to tame the region after

SEPA WA



the war, one can see, without too much explanation, why the Basques can be a bit uppity about politics and why Toshack's departure to Madrid was seen as something of an indiscretion.

Indeed, one might go so far as to say that the only legal manifestation of politico/cultural expression during the Franco years was through football. When Franco was on his death bed, the captains of Bilbao and Real Sociedad walked out on to the pitch at the Atocha Stadium here carrying the Basque flag, the *'Ikurrina'*, a politically provocative act to say the least. It was a seminal moment, and all Basques remember it. The two captains, Kortabarria and Iribar, have since become involved in politics at local levels.

Going back further in time, the first President of the Basque Government during the period of the Republic in the 1930s was Jose Antonio Aguirre, an ex-Bilbao player of the twenties. Significantly during this period, Real changed their name to *Donostia*, the Basque name for San Sebastian, since Real Sociedad means 'Royal Society', a name granted back in 1910 by Alfonso XIII. After the civil war, the name obviously reverted back. Nowadays, there is an *Euskadi* (Basque) selection which plays once or twice a year. They recently drew 2-2 with Romania in Bilbao, and in May they travelled to Tbilisi to play Georgia without the various World Cup players who would normally be available.

Politics stalks the club at every turn. A contemporary radical film producer, Elias Querejeta, played for Real in the sixties, and then there's the story of Patxi Alcorta's bar...

Patxi, a famous fan of Real, ran a bustling bar for many years in the town. His daughter was married to a famous ETA Comandante, shot by the Guardia Civil in 1975. Life in San Sebastian revolves around its numerous watering holes, and has been said to contribute to the disappointing average crowds of 15,000 at Atocha. Patxi came up with the idea of letting his punters know what the score was by suggesting to the club that they used an old cannon on match days. The idea has stuck. One boom means that the visitors have scored, two means a home goal. The explosion is so loud that if you're at the ground, your teeth come loose from their moorings. In the bars, the first boom always brings about a hush, the second a warm burble of reassurance.

RATE

YS

> ***"Spain to them is a foreign land. To travel south is to go to Spain, a different country with a different language."***

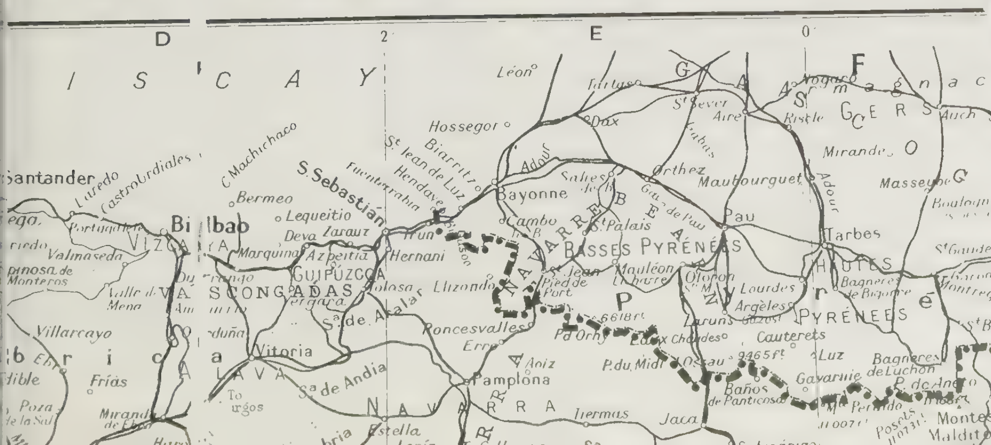
All of the above goes some of the way to explaining the policy of Basque-only players, a policy only recently relaxed. Aldridge is referred to as an *extranjero* (foreigner), but it would seem that Spanish players are one step further removed from whatever this defines. Loinaz, Aldridge's understudy, is a French Basque and therefore acceptable, but no Spanish player pulls on the blue and white stripes. The club secretary denied to me that there was a policy, only that the 'base' of the club has always been to recruit players born in the region, but he was clearly being discreet. The departure of Bakero, Beguristain and Lopez Recarte to Barcelona for a combined fee of roughly £3m, coming on top of the defection of Loren and Iturrino to richer rivals Bilbao seems to have been the spur to recruit Aldridge. Like Yorkshire Cricket Club, principles seem to be slowly giving way to pragmatism.

Nevertheless, the club has done well with seemingly very little. Champions in 1981 and 1982, six players in the side that finished so impressively in Mexico, Cup winners in 1987, they once again finished in the top six, way ahead of their supposed bigger neighbours, Atletico Bilbao. Aldridge has contributed to this in no small measure, scoring twenty-one goals despite missing the first five games of the season. It says much for the man that he seems to have settled well into this complex maelstrom of soccer and politics. Recently, it was reported here that a newspaper had alleged that Aldridge was unhappy, that his wife and kids weren't settling in, that the team's tactics didn't suit him etc. etc. *El Diario Vasco*, the region's major paper, swiftly published Aldridge's denial of the report, and though cynics might whisper that he was under orders, all the journalists here were most surprised by the allegations. In fact they are quite sure it was utter crap.

This is an important issue, and one that will grow in relevance as European boundaries shrink. 'Acculturation', the happy adaptation of the individual to the language and lifestyle of his or her new environment, obviously depends on a lot of factors — but learning the lingo is crucial. According to one journalist I spoke to, Aldridge *"No sabe ni mierda"* (knows fuck all), but everyone thinks he's a good guy, easy going and witty. Apparently he's become good mates with Billabona and Alava, two players who speak English, so he's a bit lazy with his lessons. Basque, an incredibly complex language, is spoken by most of the players, but rarely used on the pitch. Just as well. But foreign players neglect this at their peril. Ask Mark Hughes and Ian Rush. Taxi drivers in Bilbao insist that it was Kendall's poor Spanish that got him sacked. *"Absurdo!"* one of them recently told me. *"Era buena gente"* (he was a good bloke). Toshack, needless to say, speaks excellent Spanish, and apparently knows how to abuse in Basque.

Aldridge should see out his three year contract. The Basques, like Scousers, are a special community, and this is a far more open place than popular imagination would have it. There's an Irish connection too. A glance at the bi-lingual *History of Real Sociedad* in the municipal library reveals the interesting fact that Real's first centre forward in 1909 was one John MacGuinness, a prolific scorer and renowned boozer. Still, he never had the chance to score a goal in the World Cup against Spain. Should that little scenario take place, Mr Aldridge will without doubt be given the freedom of the city.

Phil Ball



Gold Fools

What goes 1-1-2-1-2-3-4-4-3-2?

A drunken big-band leader?

The number of goals conceded on TV by Bobby Mimms?

No. It's obvious, really. The sequence denotes which division Wolverhampton Wanderers played in during the 1980s. This includes a spell of nine seasons in which only one ended in neither promotion nor relegation. The odd season out was 1986-87 and would have ended with promotion had it not been the first season of the play-offs. (Whatever happened to Aldershot anyway?)

> ***"If ever I get the time to start my own magazine it will be called Steve Mardenborough's Shoulder, for this was the precise part of the anatomy that gave Wolves their first win at Anfield since 1950. Liverpool 0 Wolves 1."***

An incredible decade, much of which has been chronicled elsewhere: Andy Gray....The Receiver...The Bhatti Brothers... Receiver...Chorley...Steve Bull...

We didn't really have more receivers than a telephone exchange during the 1980s, but it's still a good joke.

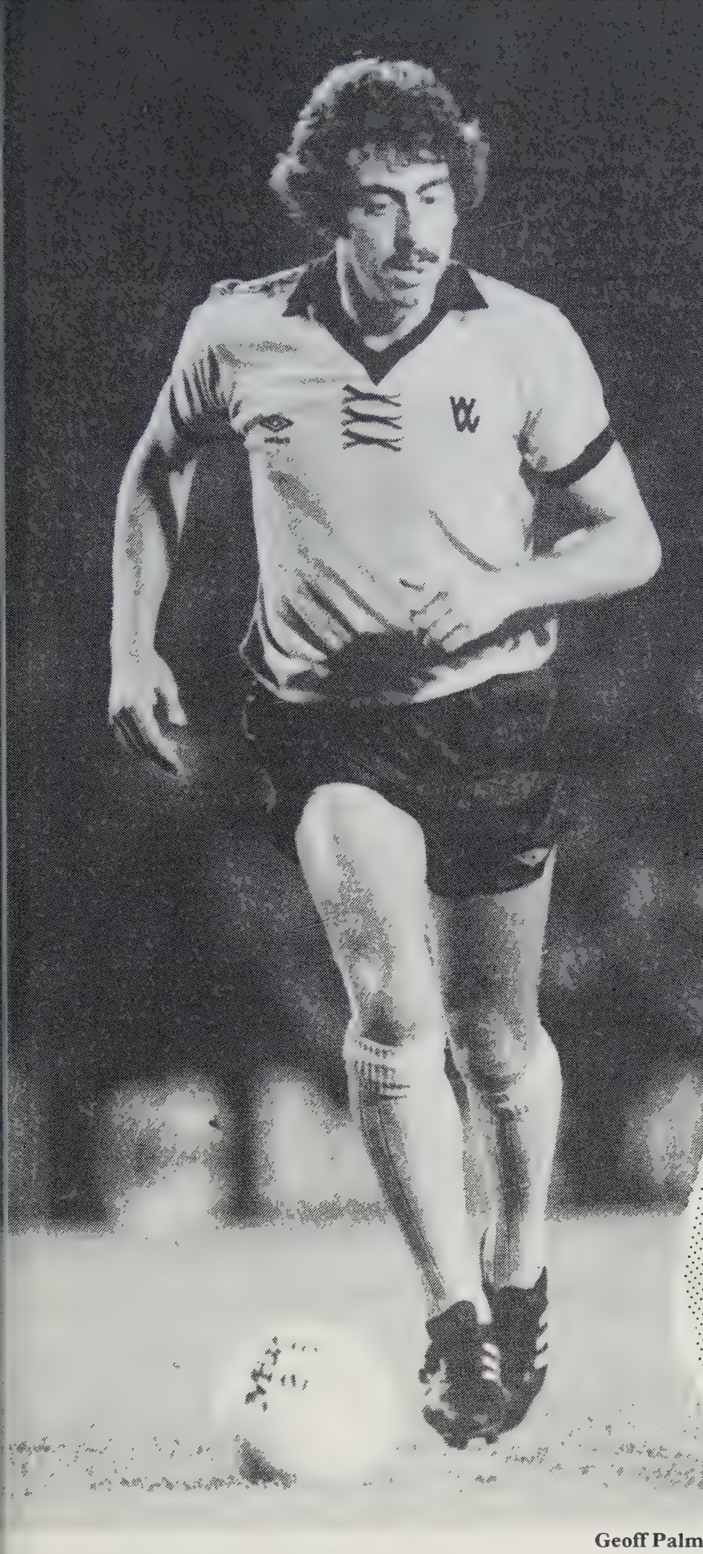
From a personal point of view, 1983-84 was the most remarkable season of an amazing decade. It marked Wolves' last appearance to date in Division One, and the closest my love affair with them has ever been to ending. The season opened with high expectations. Wolves had been promoted from Division Two as runners-up to QPR, although the realists noted that this had been as a result of early season form (2 wins in the last 13 League games). Liverpool were the first game and the home fans were in raptures as early as the second minute when Geoff 'Zico' Palmer scored the first penalty of the new season. In truth 'Zico' was one of those cruelly ironic nicknames, although 300 appearances in Division One suggest he wasn't as bad as we thought at the time. Palmer was an 'old-school' full back whose main attribute was a scything tackle which earned him more bookings in the 1970s than Dickie Henderson. His battles against Willie 'Mine's a Coke' Johnston when we played West Brom will remain with me forever.

Palmer scored several penalties for Wolves, employing a subtle technique of hitting the ball in the general direction of the keeper's head, as hard as he could. The fact that other teams were unaware of his tactic probably meant they were so confident of beating us that they didn't bother to have us watched in advance. His opening day penalty against Liverpool was in fact equalised, but we were happy to start the season with a draw.

However, this opening day point was not a sign of things to come. Defeat followed defeat. As the weeks wore on, optimism turned to fatalism; floating supporters turned to their armchairs; and I turned to my mates, and commented that a fully-inflated balloon in a roomful of over-active hedgehogs had more chance of staying up than us.

When November 26th arrived, Wolves had played fourteen League games and were the only club left without a win. Our next match was at West Bromwich, and we feared the worst. To compound our pre-match worries, the *Match of the Day* cameras were there. Oh my God! National humiliation, and John Motson as well.

Danny Crainie, an on-loan signing from Celtic, put us in front after a goalless first half. Soon after the goal, with the Wolves fans still delirious, Crainie set off on a run, let fly from about thirty yards, beat Paul Barron all ends up, and almost broke the net at the 'Brummy Road End'. When Wayne Clarke made it 3-0 the term 'multiple orgasm' could have been invented to describe the scenes amongst the Wolves' fans. Wolves then brought on 'Zico'. Barry Davies (pre-match Motson fears unfounded) described this as a ploy to *"batten down the hatches."* The fact that Garry Thompson scored a late goal for West Brom was of consequence only to a friend of mine who had taken very lengthy odds on a 3-1 Wolves win. If my wife ever tapes over my video of this match it may well be her last act as a



Geoff Palmer

married woman.

Christmas came and went without a home win. By New Year's Day we had two, with Norwich and Everton being despatched, 2-0 and 3-0 respectively. The 14th January was my birthday (and, funnily enough, still is). Wolves away at Liverpool. Considering the fact that we had almost fallen off the bottom of the League table, a single-figure defeat would have been a nice present. If ever I get the time to start my own magazine it will be called *Steve Mardenborough's Shoulder*, for this was the precise part of the anatomy that gave Wolves their first win at Anfield since 1950. Liverpool 0 Wolves 1. Two days later Wolves played an FA Cup second replay at Coventry and, despite being the first man to score a Wolves winner at Anfield since Noah's dog died, Mardenborough was dropped to accommodate the fit-again Mel Eves. There was some sort of poetic justice in our 3-0 defeat.

Wolves' predicament — lack of talent and lack of cash — could best be exemplified by two players, Mark Buckland and Sammy Troughton. Buckland was signed from Cheltenham as a *"goalscoring full back."* This description proved to be inaccurate in just two areas. He tried his best, but the fact that a player of his standard could get into the team showed just how poor we were.

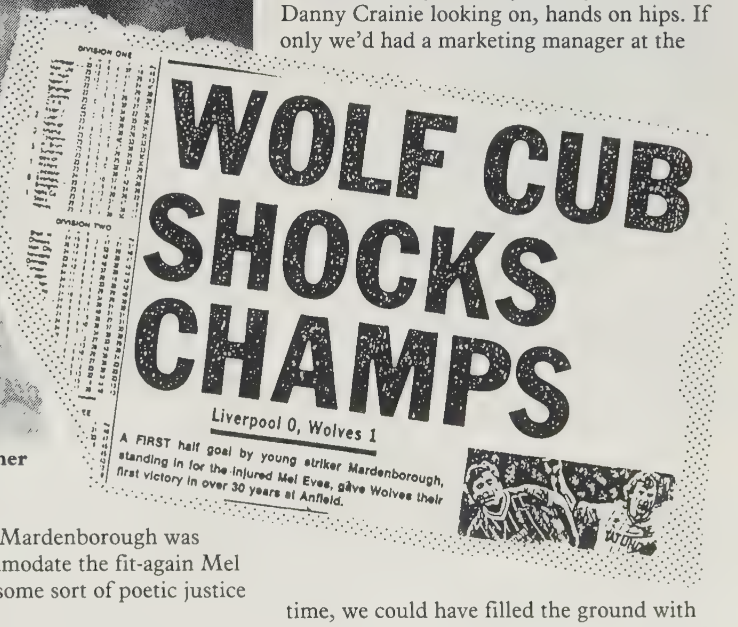
In contrast, Sammy Troughton appeared in the team from nowhere. He was a strong midfielder, whose first six appearances coincided with the wins over Liverpool, Norwich and Everton, and two FA Cup draws against Coventry. Some coincidence. Before the season ended, Troughton had gone, as quickly and mysteriously as he had arrived.

"Palmer scored several penalties for Wolves, employing a subtle technique of hitting the ball in the general direction of the keeper's head, as hard as he could."

Frustrations came to a head in April after six successive defeats. The abysmal run cost manager Graham Hawkins his job. It was rumoured that Hawkins had only got it in the first place because he was an old friend of the Chairman, Derek Dougan, and agreed to do what he was told. Rumour also had it that the only other candidate for the job prepared to operate under the terms laid down by Dougan was Virgil Tracey. Hawkins edged out Virgil because of a marginally greater knowledge of football, and, more importantly, because the strings were less visible.

I took my fifty square feet of space in the South Bank for the home match against Leicester. (By now, all agoraphobics had medical notes forbidding them from attending Molineux.) This was the day Wolves fielded the most 'pretty-boy' forward line in the history of English football. Wolves kicked off as Scott McGarvey rolled the ball sideways to Billy Livingstone, with Danny Crainie looking on, hands on hips. If only we'd had a marketing manager at the time, we could have filled the ground with screaming teenage schoolgirls, regardless of how bad the football was. In truth, poseurs they may have been, but Wolves' worst players they certainly were not. The team recorded their sixth and final win of the season thanks to a goal from Gordon Smith. This was the last First Division football seen at Molineux to date.

Wolves then started their amazing plummet through the divisions, employing on the way players so bad that I wouldn't have picked them for my Sunday morning team. This left me to wonder: how *did* we beat Liverpool?



DIVISION ONE

DIVISION TWO

WOLF CUB SHOCKS CHAMPS

Liverpool 0, Wolves 1

A FIRST half goal by young striker Mardenborough, standing in for the injured Mel Eves, gave Wolves their first victory in over 30 years at Anfield.

Mick Hinton

Diff

Remember when you were twelve and played God with the structure of the Football League? Well, some people never grow out of it. Let's hope they don't include Arthur Sandford...

Most speculative thought about football is along the lines of 'What if' Matthews, Lineker, Best etc had played together. This is a different kind of 'What if'.

'What if' the Football League had to start again and choose anew the location of its clubs? Football is always considered to be the national game of the British, but it's far from equally popular everywhere. The Scots, for instance, are much more likely to play or watch than the English and Welsh. Take the argument further or, if you don't fancy a dose of history, geography and statistics, abandon the ramble here.

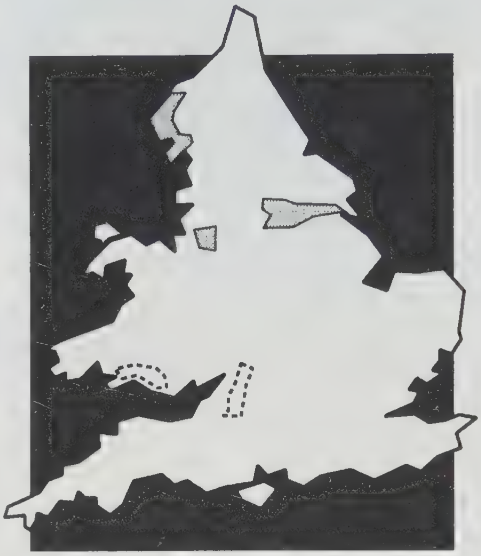
The idea of having precisely ninety-two Football League clubs is now a comfortable one. Heads are shaken when 'progressive' newspapers like *The Sunday Times* advocate rationalisation and taking lessons from the National Football League (American Gridiron). But at the start of every decade it is hard to imagine ninety-two League clubs continuing to exist at the end of it. What are the realities of population figures and competition for support from other Winter team sports?

We live now in the longest period during which the size of the Football League has remained constant. It was enlarged from eighty-eight to ninety-two in 1950 with the addition of Gillingham, Colchester, Scunthorpe and Shrewsbury. The major expansion of the League occurred in 1920-22 with the incorporation of the Southern League Division One (as Division Three South) and the creation of a Division Three North a year later. The latter was a decision of questionable merit, bringing in a clutch of weak clubs (Rochdale, Hartlepool, Halifax etc) that have never subsequently progressed.

1921, then, is the key date in the formation of the Football League as it now stands. It is the point in history when the process of evolution of a truly national League stagnated for over half a century until 1987, and the first direct membership connection between the League and the rest of the Football Association with automatic relegation to the GM Vauxhall Conference.

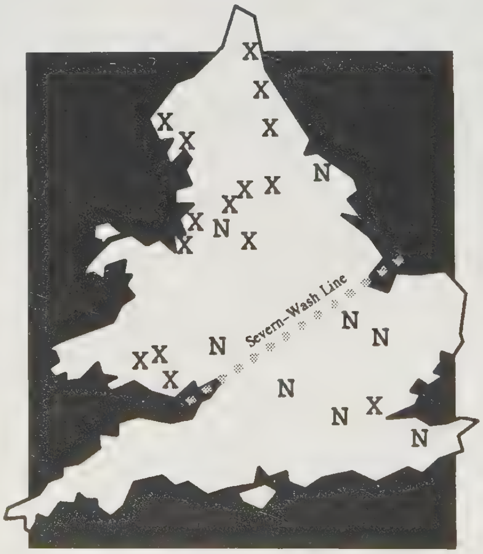
There have obviously been great changes in society and in the regional distribution of population and wealth since then. The question a more marketing-oriented League might ask is, are our clubs now in the right places to match the available population?

It certainly seems that changes in the membership of the League since 1921 have mirrored the general South-Eastward drift of the population. Of the fifteen teams to have *permanently* left the League since then, only one — Thames (like Thames Valley Royals, a businessman's confection) — has gone from below the Severn-Wash line. Since the national Fourth Division started in 1958 only Colchester from the South-East have left (temporarily?) and only Wigan and Scarborough have joined to boost a Northern complement depleted by six departures.



▨ areas of Rugby League dominance

⬚ areas of Rugby Union dominance



X = ex-League clubs post 1921

N = new League club post 1958

But if the League started again tomorrow... who would come in and who would go?

Three major factors prevent an equal distribution of clubs around the country: a) the lack of big towns/cities in certain counties (Cornwall, Somerset, Bucks); b) the presence of competitive football codes (particularly Rugby League); and c) accidents of history.

North-East Lancashire, one of the original 19th Century football 'hotbeds', is still over-represented in terms of football clubs even though Darwen, Nelson and Accrington are all long gone, and Blackburn Olympic but a footnote on the FA Cup trophy. Some cities saw amalgamation between rival clubs (Newcastle, Sunderland), while in others (Stoke, Nottingham) they carried on as separate entities. There was never any planning where to 'put' clubs — which is probably as well as they never seem to work when 'put' somewhere!

But *if* the League started again tomorrow and tried to create a nationally representative League based on the population of counties today, who would come in and who would go?

Darlington have already made it since the calculations were done but on the 'in' list are some places that don't have obvious teams (the likeliest local equivalent is suggested alongside). On the 'out' side, one or two grand old clubs fallen on hard times and, interestingly, one or two of the League's babies (Cambridge, Scarborough).

If the same exercise is applied to the population of towns/cities/boroughs the results become even more ludicrous/alarming/infantile depending on your point of view. Another team in Leeds! Joy at last for Barnet! Apoplexy in Blackburn as Rovers are replaced by 'Lambeth'! Welcome Solihull, Cradley Heath and Havant. Farewell Port Vale, Shrewsbury and Chesterfield. Worst of all, dozens more London derbies: Bexley *v* Bromley, Southwark *v* Brent and Havering *v* Enfield. In all, there would be 26 new 'clubs' – mostly in London and Birmingham. Interestingly, besides a second Leeds team, other Rugby League strongholds would also be represented: Warrington, Salford and St Helens. The distribution of Rugby League clubs shows the precariousness of football's claim to be 'the national game' in every English (and Welsh!) locality.

The vast bulk of Rugby League clubs are concentrated in three distinct geographic

erent League

areas: the Aire-Calder Valleys around Leeds and the West Riding, the South Lancashire plain between, but not in, Liverpool and Manchester, and the nuclear coastline of Cumbria. Elsewhere in the North, Association Football is the dominant force. Being a Football League club in a Rugby League area is not good for you. The *only* two successful eras for any such clubs were Huddersfield's in the 1920s and Leeds United's Revie decade. Hull, the largest English city *never* to have seen First Division football has, surely not by chance, two Rugby League clubs. It is as if the strength of one code saps the other, and the lack of honours at Hull City, Halifax Town and Wigan Athletic suggest that soccer will never win out as the primary game.

Rugby Union also has its strong areas, particularly in South Wales and the West Country, where football is unlikely now to become the prime local sporting interest.

Even in football playing areas, the degree of support varies considerably. Obviously, interest is stimulated by the simple fact of availability of League football to watch and the habit, over generations, of going to watch it. Despite playing in a less wealthy, more geographically competitive environment, original members Burnley draw bigger crowds than recent arrivals, and Fourth Division rivals, Peterborough, even though Peterborough has a larger population.

Traditional local factors play an important part in building a football club (hence Wimbledon's comparative failure at the turnstile) — even though nowadays a significant proportion of regular supporters (20-40 percent) of almost any club no longer live in that town or city.

Another way of determining 'footballing strength' by county was examined recently by Michael Joyce in the Association Of Football Statisticians Report No. 58. He discovered the county of birth of all 3,000+ players in the Football League between 1981-82 and 1985-86 (see map).

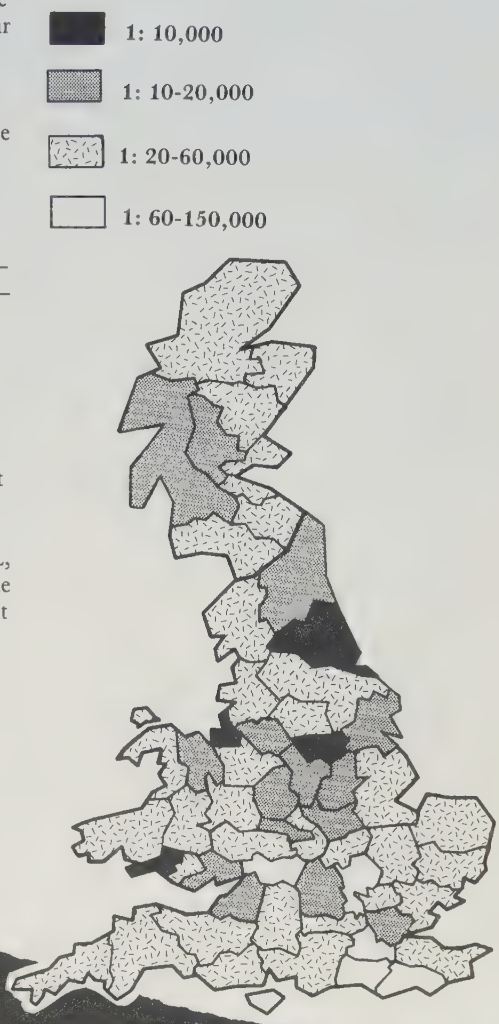
Just as athletics facilities at Gateshead 'bred' Steve Cram, so existing football areas breed more footballers. Some Scottish areas (indeed, some from Northern Ireland too) produce significantly more Football League players than do some English counties. The real surprise is Oxfordshire's ratio being four times higher than that of neighbouring Buckinghamshire despite having only one League club. 'Football's' South Yorkshire produces nearly three times as many League footballers as 'Rugby League's' West Yorkshire.

Where does all that leave us? Football in England and Wales has stronger regional bias than might at first be imagined, with — despite their obvious population potential — a number of no-go areas. Any new grand design, from League HQ or elsewhere, probably can't effectively alter the distribution of League 'franchises' by more than half a dozen places. League football is where it is because that's where it started, and it'll stay there because they are not that interested in other places.

As for *The Sunday Times* homilies on the success, structure and resources of the NFL, well, if you divided the US population by the number of NFL clubs and then applied that ratio to the population of England and Wales, do you know how many Football League clubs would be left? You guessed it – five! The Aston Villains, the Arsenal Gunners, the Tottenham Cocks, the Manchester Devils and the Liverpool Redshorts. God forbid. Support your local team.

Roger Titford

Pro footballers per head of county population



OUT

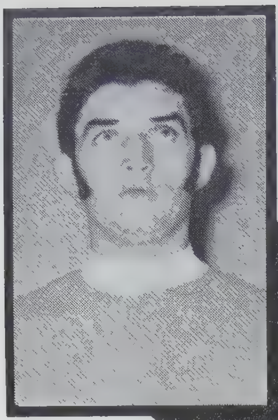
SCARBOROUGH
ROCHDALE
ROTHERHAM
SCUNTHORPE
NOTTS COUNTY
HARTLEPOOL
DONCASTER
CAMBRIDGE
BURNLEY
WIGAN
BURY

IN

DARLINGTON
WOKING
STEVENAGE
FARNBOROUGH
GLOUCESTER CITY
AYLESBURY
CHELMSFORD
YEOVIL
WORTHING-BOGNOR
DARTFORD
NEWPORT AFC

LEAGUE DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
erpool	13	3	4	0	13	4	4	0	2	7	6	25
beth	13	5	2	0	17	4	2	1	3	6	11	24
lsea	12	3	1	1	13	2	3	2	2	12	10	21
senal	13	2	5	0	12	8	3	1	2	9	8	21
adley Heath	13	4	2	1	14	8	2	1	3	5	6	21
rwich	13	5	0	2	14	8	1	2	3	6	12	20
ton Villa	13	4	0	2	7	7	2	2	3	4	8	20
verton	13	2	3	1	11	8	3	1	3	12	12	19
t Helens	13	4	0	2	11	9	1	3	3	8	10	18
oventry	13	4	2	1	9	3	0	3	3	4	8	17
Southampton	12	4	1	1	12	5	1	1	4	8	14	17
Manchester Utd	13	2	2	2	8	7	2	2	3	8	7	16
Nottingham For	13	3	1	3	12	7	1	2	3	3	5	15
Havant	13	1	2	3	5	8	2	4	1	6	6	15
Derby County	13	3	2	2	11	7	1	1	4	9	18	15
Crystal Palace	13	4	2	1	11	7	0	1	5	3	20	15
QPR	13	2	1	3	6	8	1	4	2	8	8	14
Millwall	13	4	1	2	14	7	0	1	5	3	17	14
Sheffield Utd	13	2	2	2	7	5	1	2	4	4	10	13
Warrington	13	2	2	2	5	4	1	1	5	1	16	12

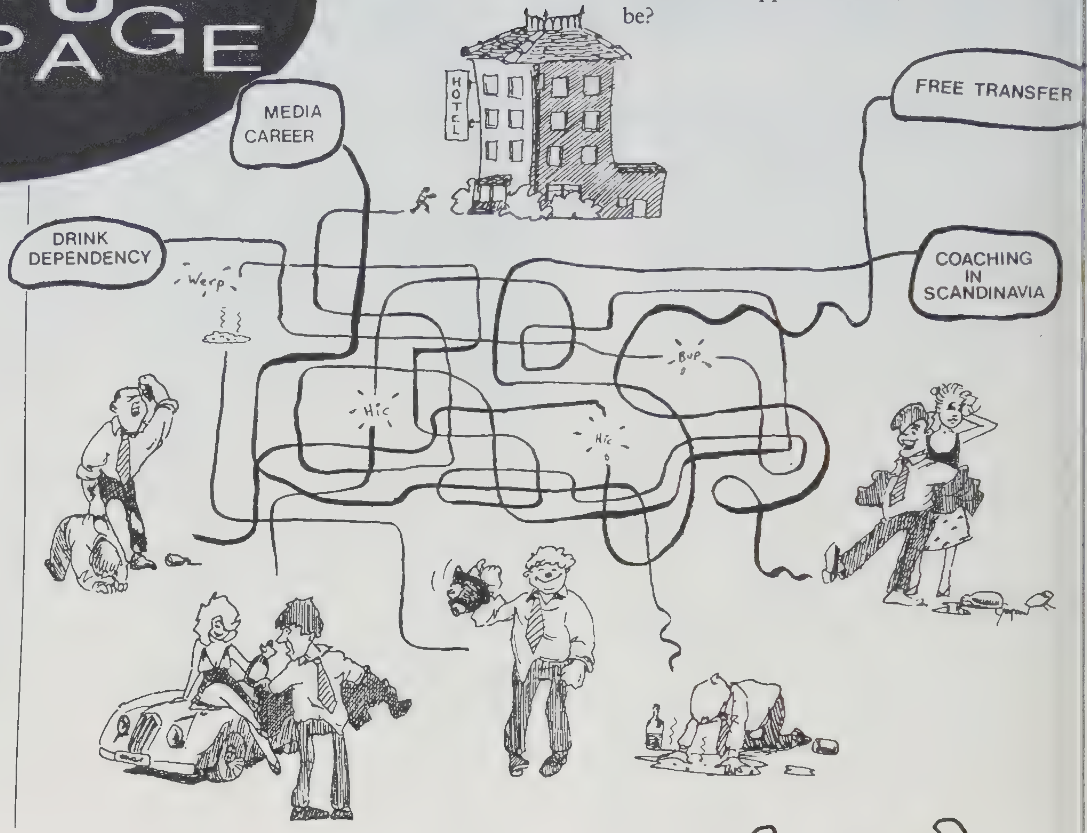


Mexico's last line of defence

IGNACIO CALDERON'S FUN PAGE

ROUND THE BEND

Uh-oh! Looks like these players have disobeyed their manager's orders and stayed out late! Only one will make it back to the hotel for the appointed time, but who will it be?

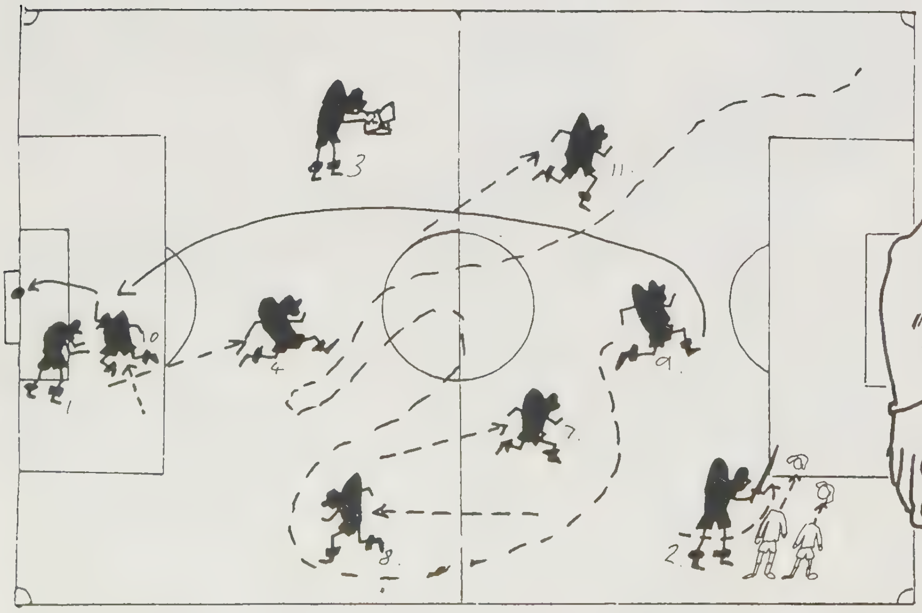


HA! IT'S IAN RUSH!

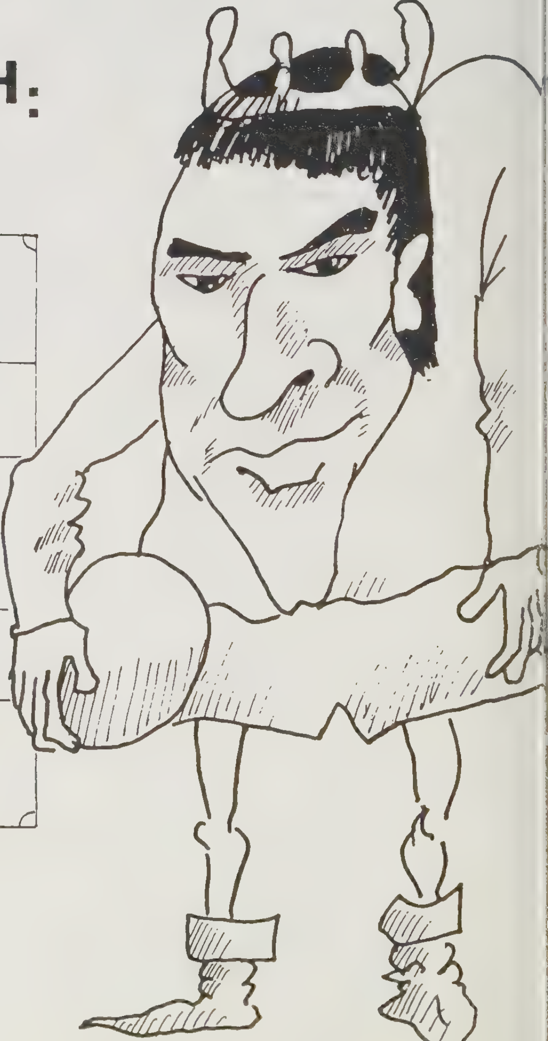
HA! AN EARLY BATH!

LET'S TALK TACTICS WITH:

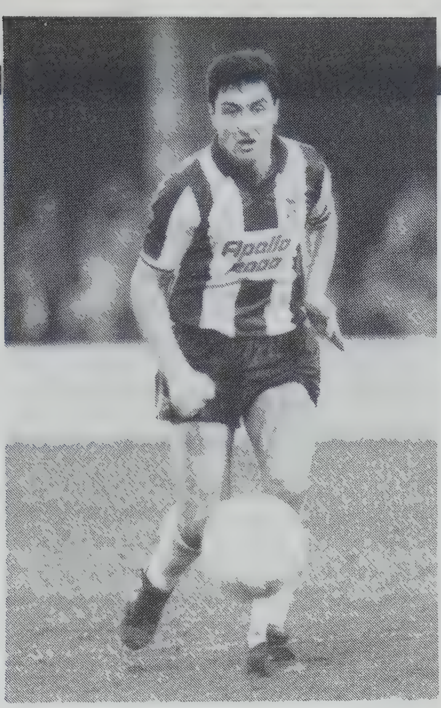
Richard III



The ball having been humped up field, there is plenty of scurrying urgency in evidence from all but the left back, pre-occupied with writing a letter to the *Guardian* about how Olivier's film portrayal has hampered any objective research into Richard's character.



Do you know they play in San José?



The San Jose Cup played on May 18th and 20th was billed as 'Camel World Class Soccer' and my team were obviously invited to play the role of hump. The four teams involved: Spanish champions Real Madrid, top German outfit Cologne, Vasco da Gama, the Brazilian champions, and West Brom. Fortunately the organisers didn't keep reminding everybody we had only just missed relegation to the Third Division after extolling the virtues of the other three teams. How did they ever pick us, I thought? Simple, boss Brian Talbot knows the organisers. A company called Pro Link set up the tournament, claiming it represented the start of the build-up to the 1994 World Cup, a competition they are investing in heavily.

The programme would qualify for anyone's worst top ten and promised a feast of football goodies – the great skill of the Brazilians, the technique of the Spaniards, the speed of the Germans and the work ethic of the English! A bit rich when we are usually depicted as a nation of idle layabouts; they could have at least said 'teamwork'.

At the pre-tournament, banquet speakers were at a loss to find anything positive to say about the Albion except that we were a club with a long tradition and were five-time Cup winners. Even some of the Albion party tittered whenever the term 'four world class teams' was used. Nevertheless my team were here and I'd be one of a very select few true Baggies fans to see them in action against the elite. 1989-90 was the first season I hadn't seen them since 1962-63, so the San Jose Cup would break my duck.

I managed a chat with the boss and gave him my view of he board – a bunch of tight-fisted, short-sighted incompetents. You only have to look at some of their recent managerial choices; Ron Saunders being the prime example. Only the Albion would offer a job to a man who turned a gruesomely unattractive Birmingham City into something Dario Argento would have been proud of, a shrewd manager who sells Steve Bull, buys George Reilly and plays him at centre half. They even gave the arch-traitor Atkinson a second chance and he duly shat on us again. Needless to say Brian didn't confirm any of the mildly slanderous terms I used.

The *prima donnas* from Real Madrid turned up an hour late, still track-suited and looking disinterested in all proceedings. I managed to exact some measure of revenge on John Toshack by insisting he autograph the picture of him dressed as Batman on page sixty of a copy of *Offside!* I just happened to have with me.

I invited the Albion party to my bar in San Fransisco on the Saturday after the Friday night game. I figured they'd all need a drink afterwards.

The tournament took place at Spartan stadium in San Jose, an uncovered all-seater ground with a 15,000 capacity. The seating consisted of long aluminium benches which were a bit hard on the bum; a lot of people turned up with cushions. As there were only about 10,000 there the competition had hardly caught the imagination of Northern California as the organisers claimed. They would have done better to hand out free joints at the gate.

The first game between Cologne and Vasco da Gama was settled by a penalty shoot out after a 2-2 draw. It was only when Real came out that the real purpose of the tournament was revealed. It was the perfect vehicle for Mexican star Hugo Sanchez, greatest national hero since Emile Zapata. I don't think there have been any in between. Ninety percent of the crowd were there to cheer on Hugo not Real. I was surrounded by thousands of Mexicans and when the game started it was like the Alamo on the pitch as well. The Albion hardly got a kick. My solo chants of *"Come on you Baggies"* were drowned out by *"Hugo, Hugo, Ra! Ra! Ra!"* It really was men against boys, but with Brian Talbot and Stuart Pearson starting the game it was sometimes men against older men. The kindest things that could be said were that we played out of our skins and still weren't good enough, but never resorted to unfair play. Real were also the only club to field anything resembling a first team squad.

Hugo duly obliged the crowd, bagging two, having a couple disallowed, one for offside, earning the offending linesmen a pelting which would have halted any English League game. He was pulled off fifteen minutes before the end, prompting a mass exodus by the Mexican contingent. Still, I can boast I've seen the Albion score against Real Madrid, even if it was a consolation penalty scored after the end of normal time in a 6-1 drubbing. Our green and yellow striped away kit was also the most colourful there.

I was amazed to discover that the club had nothing to do with the tour. A separate sponsor was found to cover hotel costs and some of the party had paid their own air fare. They were each on $25 a day, which had to cover food and any other expense. The Albion really were poor cousins; the other teams had luxury coaches while the Albion made do with four mini vans. Bloody embarrassing. The team even had to give up its allotted dressing room when Vasco da Gama expressed a preference for it and refused to compete until they got their way. Three Baggies fans I talked to who were travelling on the same plane as the players knew nothing of the banquet or where the team were staying!

> ***"How did they ever pick us I thought? Simple, boss Brian Talbot knows the organisers."***

Predictably Real won the final against Cologne, and despite a much-improved performance, the Albion lost 4-2 to Vasco da Gama in the third place match. So we left empty-handed, the team moved on to Phoenix and Los Angeles and I was left to ponder that fact that the closest I've ever got to the club was 8,000 miles from home. What I heard didn't fill me with much hope for the future. I think we might just get out of the Second, but I feel it's more likely to be through the trapdoor. As I remarked to Sam Allardyce, *"it's only your livelihood, I've got thirty years invested in this club."*

Postscript: Maybe we didn't leave completely empty handed: the *San Francisco Chronicle* reported that Real and Cologne were robbed of around $20,000, so perhaps bonuses will be more generous this year. Come on you Baggies!

Roger Howell

GENOA

"But you're English. Why aren't you going to watch England play in Sardinia, stuffed in a grotty campsite, surrounded by police, taunted by the locals, and vilified in your own newspapers?"

It's one of those questions I don't suppose I'll ever be able to answer. For, disguised in my C&A bright blue tartan swimming trunks, I was part of the Scottish World Cup Army of 1990, bound for Genoa.

In Italy, I could only marvel at the vivid sense of national identity fostered among Scotland's supporters, a nationalism of passion, wit and intense community. So often English nationalism is perceived as being ugly and xenophobic. I have to admit that I felt envious. And they didn't have Terry Butcher, the lucky sods.

Before the Costa Rican match the air was full of such optimism. Great clouds of optimism floating through the Genoan streets, in and out of Genoan bars serving warm non-alcoholic lager. Shrill shards of bagpipey optimism, as a lone piper entertained the hundreds of relaxed Scots lolling about in a park while a skinny Italian kid joined him on the drums.

Optimistic smiles from Genovese women at these white, bony men wearing fancy skirts and singing their traditional love ballads:

"We hate Jimmy Hill, he's a pooof, he's a poooooof..."

Who was this dazzling, romantic Jiminese Ill character, they asked? A Scottish film star, perhaps, or hunky pop singer? Crowds of teenagers began to hang around the park, offering moped rides to those wearing sporrans.

The bonhomie started to dissipate slightly when we encountered a trade union demonstration on the main road next to the ground. The eighteen-year-old gun-toting carabinieri on duty were in a panic as they tried to disperse the crowd. For a few minutes, things looked bad, as fans attempted to push their way past and some of the demonstrators started making taunting remarks. Then one inspired soul began chanting *"We hate Margaret Thatcher"* and a common bond suddenly appeared between the two groups. As we left the scene, the Italians were being taught the intricate melodies of that classic ditty, *"We won't pay the Poll Tax..."*

The rebuilt Luigi Ferraris Stadium in Genoa is a quite beautiful piece of architecture, as well as being impressively biased towards the comfort of the average spectator. Those looking to rebuild grounds for the 21st Century would do well to see how it blends modern safety regulations with an old fashioned terrace atmosphere.

Such a shame, then, that this wonderful ground had to be patrolled by the less than beautiful Italian police, some of whom tried desperately hard to live up to the old saying that anyone in tight trousers and leather boots with a gun and a large stick is a humourless arrogant pig. Time and again, as fans were trying to get into the stadium, and when all that was needed was a bit of co-operation, these mincing leather boys preferred to wave their batons threateningly and snarl.

The last time I had seen Scotland play was in 1975. George McCluskey scored, and the Scottish Under-15s beat England 2-1. Ed Stewpot led the singing before the game, relegating a whole generation of future English fans to total fear of music. Perhaps some of them have only become pan-European freedom fighters in order to overcome the self-hatred that stems form being forced by teacher to sing 'The Happy Wanderer' and 'Waltzing Matilda'.

Now I was on Scotland's side and the pre-match predictions flying around suggested that God, The Rub Of The Green and even the ref might be too — 3-0 Scotland, 4-0 Scotland, 6-0 Scotland. I settled for a more conservative 3-1.

GET OOT OF IT BETT YOU FAT SLOB!

With flag-waving Scottish fans cramming both ends of the ground, Costa Rican supporters could be forgiven for thinking that the World Cup was being held in Strathclyde. 20,000 will always make more noise than 12, and to this day I still don't know any Costa Rican football songs. What I won't forget is the silence that greeted the Costa Rican goal. All 12 Central Americans stood up and waved their arms about ecstatically, while the Tartan Army looked like men who'd only just realised that their team's World Cup story had been penned by Franz Kafka. Or Brian Rix.

Yet after the game, the humour soon reappeared, as fans told themselves that there were still two games to go, and the songs started up:

"One man went past Mo,
Went past Maurice Malpas.
One man and his guide dog,
Went past Maurice Malpas."

TEAM LIKE IT?

Back at the coast, the next week was spent sitting in bars watching *Mondiali* on the box. Italian commentators were a glorious alternative to the asinine witterings of Motty and Jiminese Ill. I was still being asked by locals if I was an English hooligan, and why I wasn't in Sardinia. If they thought that was strange, what did they make of the four mysterious Welshmen staying nearby, who hated rugby and singing and were in Italy because they supported Clydebank? The locals all seemed to agree on one thing though — that the Scots would be stuffed out of sight by Sweden.

If the Costa Rican game had been a carnival (until they scored), the scene for the game with Sweden was much more confrontational. Quite a few Swedish fans turned up, but when they tried to sing the Nordic shanty *"Cha cha, cha cha cha, cha cha cha cha Sweden"* it sounded remarkably like that great Scottish song *"Cha cha, cha cha cha, cha cha cha cha Scotland."* What made it worse was that their only other chant was to the tune of 'Yellow Submarine' by the Beatles, *"Her dee ger dee de gerdi gerdi gerdi gerdi ger."* So of course this too was appropriated by the multi-lingual Scots.

There were also many Genovese Sampdoria fans in the ground. Most of them wore the colours of both teams, but were ultimately won over to Scotland by the vast array of musical material on display, and in response penned a ballad which summed up the psychological and emotional ties between the two nations:

"Scotsayzi, Scotsayzi.
Oo way oh way oo way.
Scotsayzi, Scotsayzi.
Oo way oh way oo way."

One of the perils of watching matches North of the border is that you invariably sit next to The Man With The Loudest Voice In Scotland. So it was no surprise when I found that the five-foot-nothing bag-of-bones on my left was The Man With The Loudest Voice In Scotland On Holiday In Italy.

"ATTACK ATTACK ATTACK!!" he boomed in the first few minutes as the Scots dived into every challenge.

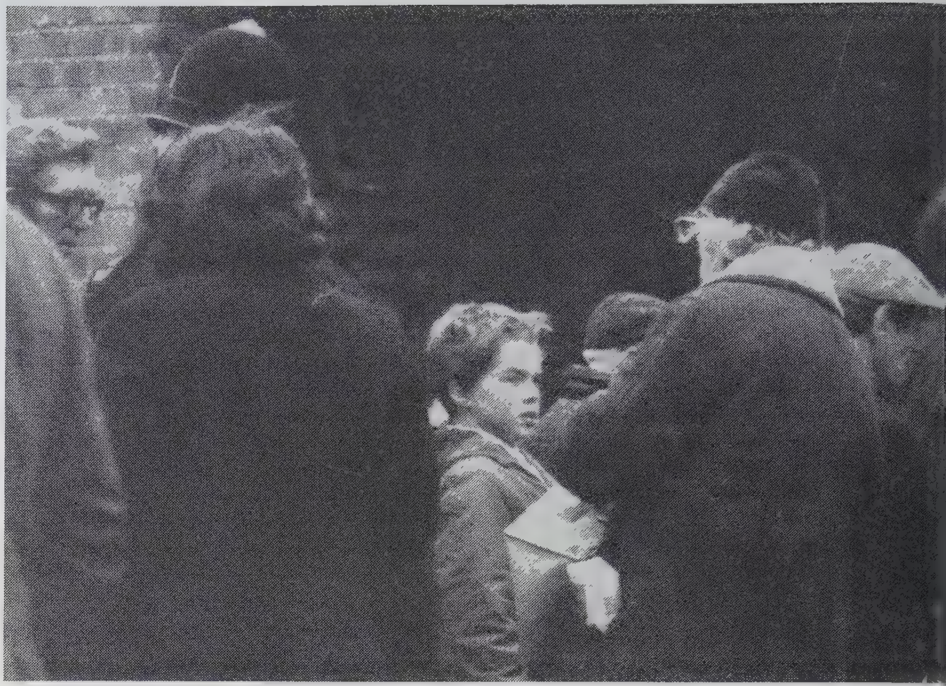
"DEFEND DEFEND DEFEND!!" went the foghorn as Sweden made a swift break. The thing about The Man With The Loudest Voice is that all the chants emanate from his direction, rippling outwards across the stand. When The Man's mouth closes, the heart is taken out of a song and it gradually fades, so that those on the periphery are the last ones to stop, and usually in mid line: *"OH IT'S A GRAND OLD team to pl...nice stadium this, eh?"*

As an outsider I felt slightly self-conscious about singing some of the Highland battle songs, especially in a Lincolnshire accent. However, the key to enjoyment on such occasions is to totally lose yourself, and I found that my nasally whine was perfect for accurate bagpipe imitations. And when Stuart McCall poked the first goal in the net, I forgot about trifling little concepts like 'being English', as we all hugged each other and screamed joyously. After Mo Johnston's penalty, we knew that Scotland were going to win the World Cup, and the songs began again. *"We're going to celebrate, we're going to celebrate..."*

AYE...
ACH, THEY SHOULD HAE TAKEN PETTIGREW!

The Italians were delighted for Scotland, and that night Genoa went crazy. People drove aimlessly around the streets, honking their horns at each other, and swapping presents through car windows. As we got back onto the main road I saw, in the distance, many hundreds of fans and flags silhouetted against the street lights, swarming and dancing and singing. They were to feel the downside of life again after the Brazil game, but this was the moment they had been waiting for, the moment that makes following football worthwhile. For someone who had laughed when Don Masson missed that penalty in 1978, I felt enlightened.

Tim Bradford



TURNING C

If you thought that being a turnstile operator was easy, Dave Ross may be about to change your mind...

I can shoulder the burden no longer. My story must be told. I admit freely that in 1973 and 1974 I worked on the turnstiles at Rugby Park, home of Kilmarnock FC. My plea of mitigation is that it was not what I intended to do. The club had been relegated after nineteen years in the top flight. Instant promotion was imperative. I wrote to Killie offering them my services in any capacity they saw fit, but stressing that the right side of midfield was their best bet. They replied.

The letter was quite specific. *"Report to Rugby Park at 1.30 on Saturday."* I was seventeen-years-old and one of my prayers had been answered. Kilmarnock FC wanted ME. This Saturday. *"Thank you, God,"* I said aloud. *"But don't forget about Raquel Welch,"* I muttered beneath my breath.

Cometh the hour, cometh the half-boy, half-man. It was late 1973 and Killie were trying to force their way out of the old Scottish Second Division. I was determined to do my duty. I arrived at the ground early and strode proudly and confidently to the window embedded in a wall marked 'Reception'. *"What do you want, son?"* asked a sweet, if patronising voice. *"Blue and white striped shirt with a No 4 on the back, smaller than Maxwell's, bigger than McSherry's,"* I said, secure in the knowledge that I was the only person capable of filling John Gilmour's boots. Replacing a player like Big John, who was a broken-leg victim, was proving to be the team's biggest problem, but now I was there and I was ready. I was dreaming...

I looked into the palm of my hand at the shiny circular button that the receptionist had given to me. 'Steward', it said. *"What kind of position is that?"* I thought. Was it some new ultra-defensive role copied from *il catenaccio*, a player permanently positioned between 'keeper and sweeper, fetching and carrying from one to the other? It seemed plausible. It wasn't. I heard the key turn in the lock behind and froze. I remained bolt upright and surveyed my surroundings. The 'cell' was about 4ft wide, I guessed, and about 6ft high. I could just about move, but as it was pitch black, I couldn't see. What had I done to deserve this? My mind raced back to various misdemeanours: invading the pitch after victory over Leipzig in 1967 — guilty; shouting obscenities at Colin Stein in 1969 — guilty; giving the 'fingers' to Ally McLeod the Ayr manager — guilty and proud of it (five years later all of Scotland would do the same). *"Let you out fifteen minutes after kick-off,"* said a voice from limbo.

"Relief beyond belief. I wasn't in jail, just manning a turnstile."

Relief beyond belief. I wasn't in jail, just manning a turnstile.

I reluctantly accepted the fact that my role at Rugby Park was destined to be that of sentry rather than midfield general and over the next year or so happily performed in my somewhat perfunctory position. My job did have its compensations. Burgeoning popularity for one. Foes became friends, casual acquaintances bosom buddies, strangers greeted me as if they were close relations, all uniting in a common cry: *"Davie, my old pal, what 'stile are you working on Saturday? Any chance of me, er, you know what I mean. How's about it?"*

I watched as older hands let friends into the ground for the price of a pint, or strangers at half-time. I realised why our crowd figures were so low. I must stress that I took no part in these fiddles. The club needed every penny. Two things kept me on the straight and narrow. A strict sense of propriety and an overwhelming fear of being caught in the act.

Some days I would draw the short straw and end up on the solitary 'stile that stayed open until half-time to cater for any latecomers. There were very few of these as in those days Scottish pubs shouted last orders at 2.30, and cleared their premises ten minutes after that. It was frustrating to see only the second half but the pay was worth it. Free admission to all home games and £1.20 in the hand. That wasn't bad money. Coupled with earnings from bingo-calling at night it allowed me to remain at school until I was eighteen while many of my former classmates were slogging their guts out for about 30p an hour at work.

A good day meant being a steward inside the ground. Great! Able to see a full ninety minutes, my ostensible task was to stop people climbing over back gardens from Dundonald Road into the main terracing.

These young lads weren't lucky enough to get a lift-over and didn't have enough money on them to pay at the boys' gate. I knew that letting them in wasn't depriving the club of cash, but, along with my fellow stewards, I took two bob from them. Just to instill a sense of social responsibility, of course, so that they realised that admission meant payment. I could try to justify my actions by claiming that this extra revenue aided my studies, but since it was spent on alcohol, dance halls, exotic tobacco and away matches I won't bother.

If a nearby club like St Mirren or Ayr United were at home to either of the Old Firm then Killie's turnstile operators would be drafted in to help out. Those were the jackpot pay-days. Double money and fish & chips. This also proved what Killie fans had long maintained – that people should be paid for having to watch Ayr United.

Being 'on duty' at Ayr posed a dilemma. The gap between turnstile and wall at Somerset Park was ridiculously large. The assumption was that it had to be very wide in order to accommodate the obese Neanderthals who must watch such a team. Three normal people standing abreast could walk through together. Accordingly, no self-respecting Kilmarnock supporter would

N THE STILE

even contemplate paying good money to enter the place. So for every Ayr fan handing money over at a derby game, half-a-dozen Killie fans would walk straight through. Since their turnstile operators were almost as slow as their full backs, no-one was ever caught. Fine. But what would I do when I was on the 'stile? I racked my brain for inspiration. What would Wallace have done? What would Bruce have done? What would Tommy McLean have done? With no answer forthcoming from the heroes of Scotland, I found the solution South of the border. In the end I did what Nelson would have done.

At one match I made a near-fatal mistake by being too scrupulous. An Irish 50p piece lay on the counter. Without looking up, I casually informed the coin's owner that his was not legal tender. An arm, distinguishable only from a gorilla's in that no gorilla of my acquaintance sports Celtic tattoos, beckoned me by the throat. I stared into a large and potentially anti-social knife, the possessor of which inquired as to why I was so prejudiced against Ireland and Celtic. I sought to persuade this gentleman that I harboured no ill-feeling towards either the Emerald Isle or his beloved bhoys. Indeed *"some of my best friends,"* etc. I spluttered out that I had even missed my cubs meeting to watch Celtic win the European Cup and weren't Rangers a pile of crap right now? On this point he thought that I was in error. After all, had not Rangers always been a pile of crap? Upon reflection I informed him that he was indeed correct.

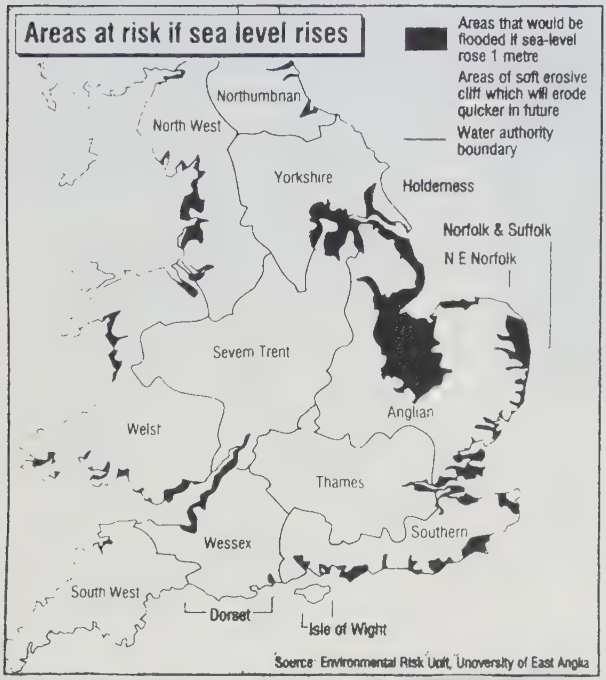
"As about two dozen Celtic fans happily stampeded past me, I began to muse on the vagaries of life."

He then told me that he understood perfectly that I couldn't accept Irish money, but, unfortunately, all the money he had was Irish. All the money his friends had was also Irish and he had a lot of friends right behind him in the queue. Since I couldn't accept Irish money, perhaps I might care to let him and all his friends into the ground anyway, by way of apology for my grossly offensive attitude? Under the circumstances I felt that this was an eminently reasonable solution to the impasse. Upon advising him of my consent to this generous proposition, his hand and knife returned to his pockets and my feet returned to the floor.

As about two dozen Celtic fans happily stampeded past me, I began to muse on the vagaries of life. Just one more step up the evolutionary ladder and he would have been capable of requesting that, as compensation for injured feelings, I hand over the day's takings as well. I found out later that that was precisely what had happened at a 'stile for the Centre Stand. Better class of customer sits down, you know, as we are all about to find out.

Dave Ross

WARMING TO THE IDEA



Source: Environmental Risk Unit, University of East Anglia

Blackpool
Brentford
Brighton
Bristol City
Cambridge Utd
Cardiff City
Carlisle Utd
Chelsea
Doncaster Rovs
Fulham
Gillingham
Grimsby Town
Hartlepool Utd
Hull City
Ipswich Town
Lincoln City
Maidstone Utd
Middlesborough
Millwall
Newcastle Utd
Norwich City
Peterborough Utd
Portsmouth
Preston North End
Scunthorpe Utd
Southampton
Southend Utd
Sunderland
Swansea City
Wigan Athletic

League Grounds Threatened By 1m Rise In Sea-Level

Much has been written in recent years about the phenomenon of global warming and the greenhouse effect. Unless the world's governments begin to take drastic action to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gasses, especially carbon dioxide, scientists predict a rise in temperatures of three degrees centigrade by the end of the next century. This would cause some melting of the polar ice-caps and an estimated rise in sea-level of one metre by the year 2100.

The effect of this on the Football League would be more drastic than any reorganisation dreamed up by Ken Bates and his partner in crime, Ron Noades. Using the map as a guide, the grounds of the thirty League clubs in the table would be flooded if the sea-level were to rise by one metre. Ironically, Ken's kingdom at Stamford Bridge would be submerged, whilst Ron's domain, Selhurst Park, would not.

The capital would lose four League grounds; Brentford, Chelsea, Fulham and Millwall — both The Den and its proposed successor. The sight of the Millwall Headhunters standing, Canute-like, in the Old Kent Road, water lapping just below their knees, will bring a smile to many a face. Maidstone United would be wise to study the map before deciding where to build their dream home, as their tenancy agreement with Dartford's Watling Street will be drowned, whilst Charlton Athletic should abandon their campaign to return to their beloved, but sunken, Valley.

The Eastern counties will become a footballing desert (or should that be ocean?) with the waters claiming Southend, Ipswich, Norwich, Cambridge, Peterborough, Lincoln, Grimsby, Scunthorpe and Hull. Of those grounds bordering the North Sea, only Scarborough's Oven Chip Stadium will be spared by the deluge. Meanwhile, in the North East, former GM Vauxhall Conference champions, Darlington, will become the region's premier/only League club.

The remainder of the North's big fish will survive, unlike the minnows of Blackpool, Carlisle Utd, Doncaster Rovers, Preston North End and Wigan Athletic. The decision by the board of Chester City to sell Sealand Road (more sea than land) now appears to be extremely shrewd business. The new owners would be well advised to apply for planning permission to build a swimming pool or aquarium rather than a superstore.

Wales will be left with one League ground, Wrexham, as will the South coast in the form of AFC Bournemouth. Bristol Rovers' move from Eastville to Twerton Park shows a degree of prescience not usually associated with directors of football clubs: their former home, and Bristol City's Ashton Gate, will become possible sets for a new version of the film *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea.*

> ***"The Eastern counties will become a footballing desert (or should that be ocean?)"***

Those clubs whose grounds are threatened could follow the example set by the Italians. When preparing Genoa's Luigi Ferraris Stadium for this summer's World Cup, they realised many spectators would be unable to see the playing surface — so they raised the level of the pitch.

Anyway, I have a more pressing problem. Anybody want to buy a 2-bedroomed mid-terrace house, in a much sought after location; built in the 1850s but recently modernised? Only five minutes from the sea...four minutes from the sea...three minutes from the sea...

Keith Chapman

Where were you when President Kennedy was shot? Who knows? Who cares? I was in short trousers anyway.

Much more momentous: where were you eleven years on to the month? Haven't got a clue? I have. I remember it as if it were only yesterday. I was in the Fifth Year at Grammar School. We had been coaxed away on a school trip to the Lake District. 4.40: expectant huddle around the black and white TV (sounds like my Dad on about the Matthews Final). Teleprinter rattling away. The dulcet tones of Uncle Frank Bough. *"Sheffield Wednesday 4.....*(teleprinter jammed once more*)"*

"Oh, God. Stepney's at it again," we cried.

".....Manchester United 4."

Mixed feelings.

"Sounds like a good game," continues Frank (classic understatement).

"I'm getting reports in my ear of an incident which marred that game." Pitch invasion?

"Jim Holton carried off — broken leg."

My world collapsed around me. The feeling still comes back to haunt me every time I open my scrap books.

THE DEVIL YOU KNOW

James Johnson

I first heard of Big Jim on a placard for the *Manchester Evening News* one gloomy evening in 1973. Things were bad. United hovering near the trap-door (what's new?). Bobby Charlton about to retire (to think, Duncan Edwards could still have been in the team instead of George Graham — whatever happened to him?).

'United Sign Shrewsbury Defender'. So said the placard. Things are bad, I thought. Only 19, he was. Oh, well.

Then we saw him play. Not an ounce of ball control. We all gasped if he held on to it long enough to read the maker's name. Sighs of relief when it was dispatched in the direction of a colleague — usually Buchan playing at right back. Things *were* bad.

As if on the road to Damascus, we were all converted. Never say die. The rock on which all number nines perish. Flying headed goals. Thirty-yard slide tackles. Forwards heading for Row Z and all that. We loved it. *"Six foot two, eyes of blue, Jimmy Holton's after you...."*

One of my most treasured moments is of Jim rising head and shoulders above a mass of straining faces to power home an equaliser *v* QPR early in our relegation season at Old Trafford. I recall the match and the goal vividly. It flew past Phil Parkes at the 'Scoreboard End' which was occupied by United fans, two of whom were my brother and me. This equalised a goal scored as a result of an inventive free kick lifted over our 'wall' for an on-rushing forward, by none other than 'El Tel'.

The dark blue of Scotland soon beckoned — anyone was better than Eddie Colquhoun. Could Big Jim cope with the complexities of continental jiggery-pokery? Oh, ye of little faith. Scotland flourish. They qualified for the 1974 World Cup on the basis of Jim's big heart. Screaming headlines in the unbiased *Manchester Evening News*...'Big Jim Shows Up Brazilians'...following the dour duel with the World Champions, whose rough-it tactics were led by, of all people, a now Afro-haired Jairzinho. This was the time everyone supported Scotland, as Ramsey slid quietly away. Big Jim even appeared on *Magpie* on children's TV. Everyone wanted to know him...

The Winter of 1974 was in stark contrast to the Summer. A second break in a comeback match in the reserves and that was that.

The unpredictability of the man on the pitch was matched by a bizarre off-the-field incident. Whilst laid up from toe to groin in plaster he attempted to put the car in the garage. Yes, you've guessed it. His foot became jammed on the accelerator, resulting in one of those crazy slide tackles being repeated in the garage. The repair bill to the car, not to mention the wall, was nothing to what it could have been to BUPA for his leg.

By now United had stormed back into the First Division and were leading the charge. Old potato-face Docherty (we *did* love him, too) had switched styles, with the equally heroic Brian Greenhoff at number five.

There was no way back. I saw Jim's last match at Old Trafford in a midweek reserve game in the rain when over 13,000 turned up (check if you don't believe me). He never played another first team game.

He actually played only one full season for United; and that was when we were relegated for the first time in yonks. Despite this his popularity was, and still is, phenomenal.

Sunderland, then Coventry, gave him a chance. His heart was still at Old Trafford. He didn't stand a chance. Oh Jim, where are you now? Running a pub somewhere?

CRE

It took me twice as long to discover Somerset football as it did Somerset cricket. Nearly twenty Summers ago, when holidaymakers from Leeds could remember Yorkshire winning something proper and Ian Botham was an embryonic Yeovil Town boot boy, Somerset would visit Torquay once a year for a John Player League bash. Plainmoor's winter heroes would be forgotten for eighty overs as Mervyn Kitchen, Tom Cartwright and Graham Burgess took the stage.

We never really associated Somerset with football, not even when dear old Sam Leitch showed us flickering Pathe newsreels of Alec Stock leading Yeovil to Cup glory nor when teams like Welton Rovers or Bridgwater Town visited Plainmoor for Western League matches. We played football, they played cricket and the Cornish were daft enough to play rugby. None of us played our respective sports particularly well. Winning was for 'up country' teams.

I have good reason to remember a distant Western League game between Torquay United Reserves and one of those sides from Somerset. It was the day I got my first pair of glasses. Naturally I was somewhat concerned what my classmates would say on the Monday so I decided to grow accustomed to the damn things in perfect solitude. Plainmoor seemed just the place. Unfortunately, a fellow second-former was there and had already called me 'four eyes' half-a-dozen times before the players appeared. Ninety minutes later I was ready to offer my new specs to hapless goalie Paddy Roche after Glastonbury had stuffed our lads 6-0.

Roche went on to play for Manchester United and the Republic of Ireland whilst Glastonbury fell from grace. I gather their decline was in no small part due to the hippies discovering the place in the late Sixties. Wise men say the club's troubles began when the Social Club was converted into a Rebirth Clinic shortly after greyhound racing was introduced at the Abbey Moor Stadium. By all accounts, Glastonbury is the only track in the country where the spectators are more heavily doped than the dogs, so lingering aromas were bound to play havoc with the team's form.

In 1990 Glastonbury FC were once again near the bottom of the Western League's lower division and, as in previous years, the arrival of the Hippy Convoy had failed to bring an influx of new talent. Maybe the League's transfer deadline should be put back until after the Spring Equinox.

Meanwhile I had shied away from joining the annual Midsummer prance around Stonehenge on the grounds that it usually clashed with the First Round of the Gillette Cup. I mourned Torquay's relegation, studied hard and moved away to spend the best part of fifteen years in the North. I never gave Somerset football another thought. Then, a couple of years ago, I grew restless of seeing Blackburn Rovers blowing promotion year after year and tired of dreadful Torquay away performances. I took the plunge and moved back to the South West, so I could see dreadful Torquay *home* performances.

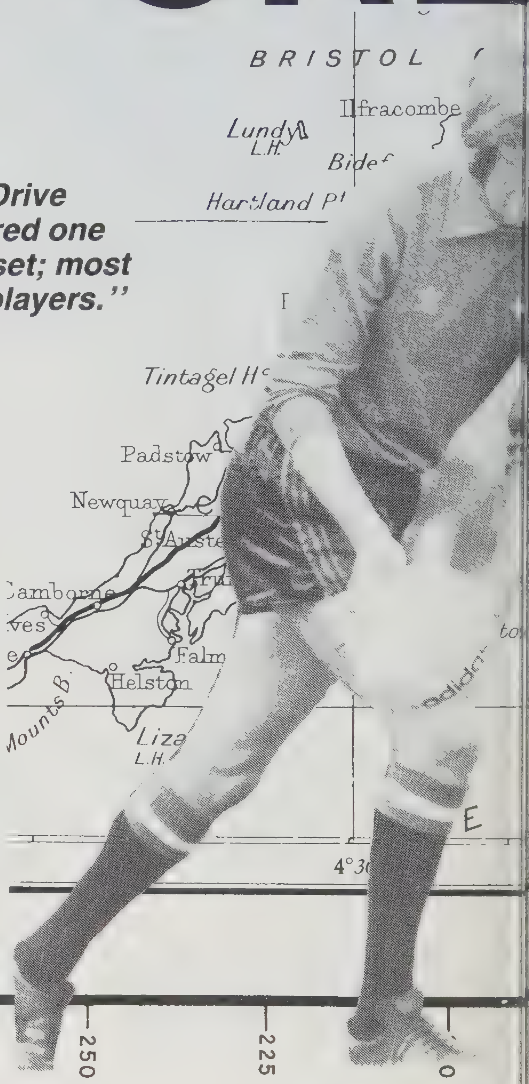
One fine September Saturday, having reached the early stages of middle age, I finally discovered Somerset football. I was in Taunton supposedly spending the day finding a place to live and, after trudging around all morning, hastily accepted somewhere so as not to miss the kick-off of an FA Cup Preliminary Round tie between Taunton and Poole. Making up the Wordsworth Drive throng to 241, I soon discovered one thing about football in Somerset; most matches feature ex-Torquay players. This one also involved a fair few off-duty postmen on account of Taunton's Keith Bowker being manager of the all-conquering South West Post Office XI. The game ended in a draw, Taunton lost the replay and I was looking for alternative accommodation within a month. I was, of course, hooked.

"Making up the Wordsworth Drive throng to 241, I soon discovered one thing about football in Somerset; most matches feature ex-Torquay players."

Two years later I still follow Torquay but am now more interested in local non-League football than the First Division. I look for Liskeard's results before Liverpool's and become impatient with time-wasters who want to talk about Manchester United instead of Mangotsfield United. I address myself to philosophical questions such as *"Why am I always 2,000 numbers away from winning Taunton Town's draw when the crowd rarely exceeds 350?"* and *"Why does* The Guardian *print the Western League's fixtures but never the results?"* Answers to more straightforward questions are often supplied by *The Sunday Independent*, a Plymouth paper not to be confused with a similarly named Yuppie rag. The paper is the source of most Western League terrace gossip and is a godsend to programme editors. Fans read about Backwell's new lights on the Sunday, read the same news again in the programme and avidly discuss it all again at half-time. It pays to be in the know.

However, to find out more about the history of football in the county I called in at the Local History Library. Dusting off a Medieval map, I discovered two places on the Somerset bank of the River Avon: *"Twerton Parke"* and *"Ye Ashtone Gate"*. So, documentary proof that Somerset has two Football League clubs, though both bear the name of a city historically associated with Gloucestershire and the boundaries have changed a bit since then. Counting Rovers and City as Somerset clubs may be stretching a point but Bath, where Rovers lodge, should still be seen as being in Somerset football-wise, even though it has been part of Avon since 1974.

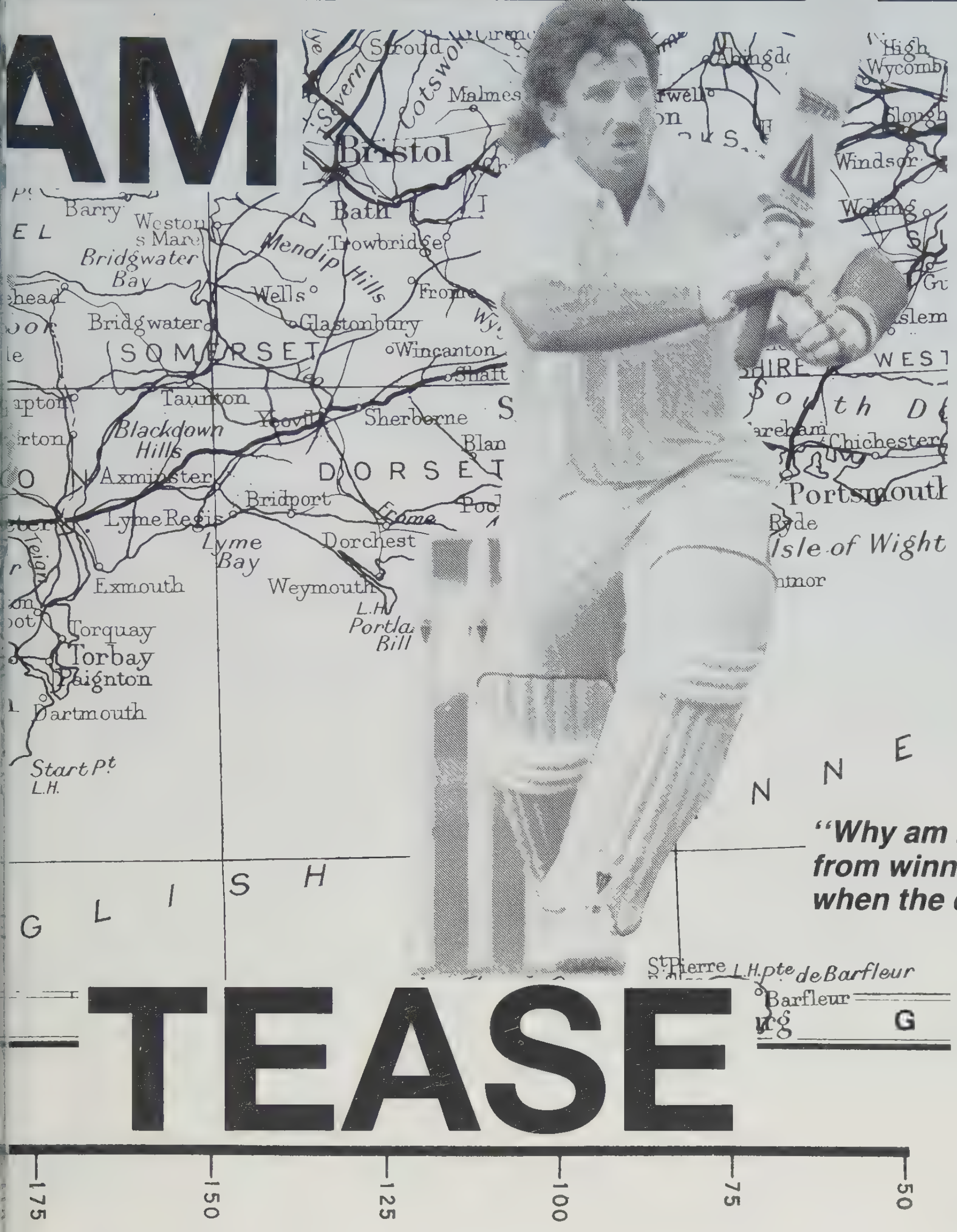
In fact Bath City form one half of Somerset's 'Auld Firm'. In the twenty-five years up to the creation of the Alliance/Gola/Conference, Bath and Yeovil won five Southern League Championships between them at a time when the Southern was the strongest competition outside the Football League. If it had not been for the 'old pals act' both could have been in the Football League long ago.



The halcyon days seem to have passed and Bath are now best known as Bristol Rovers' landlords. Letting Rovers share 'Trumpton', as it is called by Bristol City fans, may well have stunted Bath's own ambitions. City now content themselves by winning the Somerset Premier Cup again and again. Somebody has to win it and Yeovil don't seem that interested.

You only have to read the weekly *Western Gazette* to appreciate that Yeovil are a Proper Football Club. John Lukins must be one of the few journalists who covers football and religion. Both are approached in a fundamentalist manner and the poor chap often finds difficulty in distinguishing Satan from Weymouth FC. His sense of Good and Evil, Right and Wrong was sorely tested by a player called Jimmy Quinn whose match-winning performances were rather spoilt by four sendings-off in two seasons. Fans were never quite sure if Quinn was to get the Lukins 'Man Of The Match'

AM



TEASE

accolade or be the subject of a moralising sermon. Quinn has now moved on but Chairman Gerry Lock and Manager Brian Hall continue to provide the *Gazette* with plenty of copy.

Lock first came to my attention when Torquay played Yeovil in the FA Cup a couple of seasons ago. The **"Torquay not fit to be in the League"** headline was sure to catch my eye. Torquay, true to form, had been shitty to Yeovil over replay tickets and I was prepared to concede that he might have had a point. However, as on my next visit to Huish the pasties did not arrive until half-time, I began to suspect the man may be all mouth. Then, when the **"Maidstone not fit to be in the League"** headlines appeared after another cup-tie, I really was prepared to go along with the prevailing attitude at Plainmoor that Yeovil should be renamed 'Yokel' Town. However, League football must be just around the corner and I shall no doubt be jumping on the bandwagon providing it is not at the expense of you-know-who.

Yeovil are clearly Somerset's big club but the spirit of soccer in the county lies with its Western League sides. Virtually half of the League's forty members come from the county. Bridgwater, Minehead and Taunton made a bold bid to break from the fold a few years ago by joining the Southern League but soon got their come-uppance by sinking back down. It is hard to discuss the Western League without resorting to the expression 'rustic charm'. It has been years since a Western League club reached the First Round of the FA Cup, but next time it happens expect to see the 'Saint & Halfwit' team down there with pitchforks, tractors and flagons of cider.

The players may be big city types from Bristol and Plymouth, but supporters are suitably parochial. I once went to a game at Frome Town during which the opponents, Saltash United, were told to *"piss off back to Cornwall 'cos you're all a bunch of* prima donnas *down there"*. Last season, I took in an FA Vase fixture at Paulton Rovers and, seeing the Social Club and slag heap, thought I had gone to Seaham Red Star by mistake. By contrast, Weston-super-Mare are cosmopolitan sophisticates even though their players may well live in the same Bristol streets as those of Paulton. After a century of being Birmingham-by-the-sea, the resort may soon be playing host to a succession of Brummie football teams if Beazer Homes (ie Southern) League aspirations are eventually fulfilled. When this happens, visiting fans should follow the crowds because the ground is slap bang in the middle of a Great Mills, Texas Homecare and Do-it-All retail shanty town.

If Taunton are a team of posties, Weston are a team of academics counting a number of students and sixth formers in their ranks. This may have a lot to do with the coaching staff being remarkably similar to the senior management team of a local secondary school. All above board, I am sure.

However, the enigma of Somerset football must surely be Minehead. They were the talk of the terraces last year when fielding only nine players for a cup-tie against Taunton. The manager made a cock-up. He tried to cover himself by claiming the missing players had been involved in a car crash. The team joined in the pretence and *The Sunday Independent* duly fell for it. Inevitably, the fool was soon rumbled and sent packing. This sorry episode illustrates how far the club has fallen since the heady days of 1977 when they finished second in the Southern League behind Wimbledon, making them one of the top four or five non-League teams in the country. Now they would struggle to be recognised amongst Somerset's top twenty.

"Why am I always 2,000 numbers away from winning Taunton Town's draw when the crowd rarely exceeds 350?"

This story sounds rather like the recent history of Somerset cricket. Maybe herein lies the moral of the tale. Perhaps Minehead showed that football in Somerset is not meant to be big, though Yeovil seem determined to demolish this theory. Their move to a new ground in 1990-91 has been heralded as the start of the final push towards the Football League. Personally I will reserve judgement on them until the day arrives when the pasties are ready before kick-off.

A more plausible explanation as to why Somerset is not known for its football was brought home in Bridgwater on FA Cup Final morning. Four lads were walking towards me. One wore a Manchester United shirt, the others emblazoned pullovers. United? Liverpool? Bristol City? No. Vagabonds Carnival Club. Elsewhere, building and displaying carnival floats might be considered rather effete. In Somerset it is part of working-class culture. The Autumn carnival season is fiercely competitive and celebrated with more than the odd glass of cider. Cricket and carnival are clearly more important than football. At which point I must finish. The tea interval is over and Jimmy Cook needs five for his century...

Nick House

MY TEAM

ERNEST HEMINGWAY ON WOLVES

NOBEL PRIZE winning author Ernest Hemingway's passion for big game hunting, fishing and the ice dance spectaculars of Torvill and Dean is common knowledge. What's less well known is that 'Papa' was also an aficionado of soccer. His five-a-side team, 'The Montmartre Toughs', once finished as runners-up in the prestigious Left Bank Tournament.

Hemingway's conversion to the 'world game' came during a damp November spent in the Black Country and left him with a permanent soft spot for Wolverhampton Wanderers.

‘That Winter it rained. The rain came down in sheets. The sheets of rain turned the sidewalks into streams and the roads into rivers. The rivers became torrents and the torrents burst their banks and turned the meadows into lakes. The lakes became small seas and the seas became large ones. It was wet. And it kept on raining.

"Let's go to a football game," Jake said.

This was England. In England a football game didn't mean a football game. In England a football game meant soccer.

Soccer was a sissy's game.

"Soccer's a sissy's game," I said.

"Says who?" Jake said.

"Says I," I said.

"Go to hell." Jake said.

Back home on the range the deer and the antelope played. The deer and the antelope did not play soccer. They played games you need *cojones* to play. Macho games. Head-butting and disembowelling. No one ever got disembowelled playing soccer. Soccer was a boys game played by men. I was a man and I liked men's games: bullfighting, baseball, boxing and anything else that began with 'B'. Except billiards. And bowls. And basket-weaving.

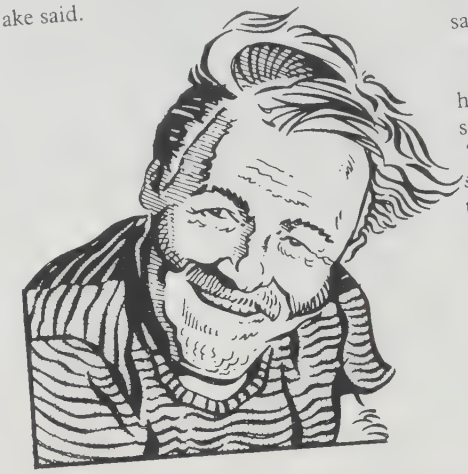
"Soccer's like basket-weaving," I said.

"You've never seen Clamp," Jake said.

Clamp. I liked the name. It had the same sound as a blow in the slats from a stampeding wildebeest.

"Who's Clamp?" I said.

"Eddie Clamp. Guy plays for Wolves," Jake said.



I liked wolves. Wolves were good. Wolves hunted in packs. A pack of wolves could bring down a 450-pound caribou stag and rip him apart.

"Wolves rip things apart," I said.

"Well, they've certainly put together a string of impressive results under the firm and steady guidance of Stan Cullis," Jake said.

Sometimes Jake talked too much. It was his weakness.

"Give him some pigs' feet, Hank," I said to the bartender.

"You want them cooked?" Hank said.

"No. I'll eat them raw," I said, *"I'm going to see wolves."*

There was Clamp and a boy named Wright. I liked Wright. He looked the way Scott Fitzgerald might if he'd worn shorts instead of drinking them. But I liked Clamp better. Clamp was meaner than Gertrude Stein with a belly-full of Absinthe. Tougher too.

"Clamp's tougher than Gertrude Stein," I said.

"The hell he is," Jake said.

I watched Clamp. He was dark. He carried himself the way a bull buffalo does when he scents lion. He tackled like a bull buffalo too. Afterwards the players he had tackled got up slowly with a look of pain in their eyes. And then he knocked them down again. His actions were solid. They carried all the power of Cezanne's brushstrokes.

"His tackles are like Cezanne's brushstrokes," I said.

"The hell they are," the crowd said.

"Says who?" I said.

"Says we," the crowd said.

"Go to hell," I said.

We walked back from Molineux in the rain. The rain was cool. Despite the coolness of the rain my eye still throbbed.

"I wish this damn rain would stop," Jake said.

"Damn the rain," I said.

"To hell with the rain," Jake said.

But in the Waterloo Road it kept on raining.’

Interview: Harry Pearson

GAZZER THE CLOWN – HE'S AS DAFT AS A BRUSH!

HEY, REF!
WHAT'S UP GAZZER?
SPLAT!
OFF!
HER HER!

Great Goals Scored By Tubby Left Backs

● No.2 John Ritchie (Preston v Watford, 25th August 1969)

Remember those far off days when the sound of boot on ball caused you to change all your plans? Magnetically drawn towards a ground, you found yourself watching South Shields Reserves v Annfield Plain when you were supposed to be doing the shopping. Nobody got married at 3 o'clock unless they wanted a women-only reception, and nobody in Sunderland would take a black and white puppy off your hands until the black was dyed out.

When my cousin Patricia was married, she ignored the Saturday rule. Since it happened in Preston, we didn't feel too bad about it, and North End were away to Bolton anyway. It wasn't a bad reception, and I broke a wrist, fortunately not my own. For some reason Cousin Nigel didn't find it as hilarious as I did.

> ***"The wind was swirling, Preston were going off the boil and the game was getting scrappy. What Ritchie had in mind is not clear."***

On the Monday I was sitting at my aunt's wondering how come Preston on a Monday could be even more boring than Preston on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday...when Nigel's dad knocked at the door. He asked two questions: "*Had your tea?*" was one, and "*Fancy going to North End tonight?*" was the other. Two minutes later, and I was wedged into the back of a Mini and off to Deepdale.

We got lost, and by the time we got in, five minutes after the start, Preston were one up. There was no mistaking who had scored, because Irvine, the Preston striker, was using up his calories in a quick burn across to the dugout, screaming as he went. If anything else happened before half-time, I've forgotten it.

I spent the break reading the programme and soaking up the Deepdale architecture. The wind was beginning to whip up, and I shuffled forward a bit to get leeward of my uncle.

I used to be a left back, and I pride myself that I became quite a connoisseur of the position. Watford had the relatively dependable John Williams, quite tall for a full back, but the central defenders needed his help quite often, so it was just as well that he could head a ball. Whether John Ritchie of Preston could do so is a moot point. He certainly couldn't time a sliding tackle. A few times he scythed down an advertising hoarding as Stewart Scullion skipped past, and there was prolonged applause as Ritchie finally got it right and took the ball, winger and halfway flag in one great sweep.

Two-thirds of the match had gone when Ritchie struck. To set the scene, I was standing in the corner, behind Preston's left back position. Ritchie was just inside the Watford half. The wind was swirling, Preston were going off the boil and the game was getting scrappy. What Ritchie had in mind is not clear. It may have been an attempt to lob the goalkeeper, who must have been nearly eighteen inches off his line; perhaps it was a centre aimed at the towering Archie Gemmill; but most likely it was a long clog designed to get shut of the ball before Watford could re-group for the offensive.

I saw Mike Walker, the Watford goalie, on *Match of the Day* recently, sitting in a dugout looking glum. From 120 yards I could see the apprehension in his eyes as Ritchie's hoof hung in the air. The effort had bowled the left back over, so he may not have seen the ball heading towards the goal line, and looking likely to cross it about eight yards from the post. Walker ran to meet it, because his back four had pushed up and there was just a chance that Irvine might poach it. Suddenly the wind shifted, and the ball lurched to the right. Walker pulled up, turned sharply, and started running to his left. Still the ball fell, wobbling eccentrically, and Walker's movements began to look despairing. Sure enough, despite a great leap and a claw with either hand in turn, he could not reach the floating spheroid, which dropped limply into the Watford goal. It hadn't the strength left to roll to the back of the net.

How could you support Preston and be an atheist after that? Preston went on to win 3-0, but finished the season bottom of Division Two, and deservedly so. Watford were three above them. On this performance it was a shame one team had to win.

Graham Brack

It's a... DAF idea

10am, May 20th 1990: my wife was in Bristol, nine months pregnant and fit to pop. I was on the M4, dressed as Rolf Harris and drinking dry cider. Twenty other men on the coach with me were similarly attired and occupied.

Almost every other car and coach on the road was swathed in blue and white, every occupant gripped by Pre-Match Tension and carnival spirit.

Similar scenes were being repeated on the M6, but virtually no-one outside of Bristol and Merseyside knew why. The reason for this mass hysteria was the Leyland DAF Cup (formerly the Associate Members Cup and the Sherpa Van Trophy) — strictly for Third or Fourth Division teams only, and subject to widespread media indifference as a consequence. I know it's a Mickey Mouse cup (*"and we'll really shake 'em up, when we win the Tonka Truck."*) but when you get to Wembley it's *different*.

Bristol Rovers took 33,000 fans with them and had there been more tickets available they would have sold them. Their average gate is less than 7,000. For days before the big match, a queue snaked out of the club shop and down the high street. Thousands of people parted with tens of thousands of pounds for Bristol Rovers' shirts, shorts, caps, cups, posters, rubbers, pencils, pens, plates and egg-cups. I restricted myself to a blue and white quartered shirt, my second Rovers mug and two Pirate hats (they'd sold out of babygros).

The contrast with the early stages of the Cup is telling. Tranmere's opening match in the Leyland DAF against Rochdale attracted just 1,078 hardy souls on a dismal December 12th, but the sun always shines at Wembley (have you noticed that?) and 55,000 jubilant fans gave the two teams a reception that would banish forever the memory of rainy nights in Rochdale.

Like I say, it's different when you get to Wembley. That's why we were all dressed as Rolf Harris; for the hell of it, because it's *Wembley*.

Rolf is a difficult man to impersonate. The occupants of passing cars gazed in at the disparate collection of ZZ Top clones and Abe Lincoln lookalikes swilling cider and you could see the question written on their faces: "WHY" A large drunk Bristolian lurched up to a friend of mine outside a pub in Uxbridge pointing his finger and shouting *"There 'e is – Salman Rushdie – I seen 'im"*.

We were ejected from a pub in Uxbridge because the landlord couldn't stand another rendition of 'Two Little Boys'. I sympathised with him. 'Tie Me Kangaroo Down Sport' was beginning to grate a little too, and as for 'Jake the Peg'...

A euphoric atmosphere was building up. I've been to hundreds of football matches at every level but the atmosphere at Wembley for the final of the Leyland DAF was the best I have ever experienced. Police were in evidence but none were necessary as Bristol and Tranmere fans mingled happily along Wembley Way, and when we got to the ground, joy of joys, they were selling beer. Absurdly priced fizzy piss from London admittedly, but it had 'beer' written on the (plastic) container. Some people may throw up their hands (or even their fizzy piss from London) at this point. Alcohol and football, like sugar and weedkiller, should never be mixed, the rationale being that hooligans are often drunk (as are thousands of law-abiding fans). It is true that excessive alcohol promotes irrational behaviour (perhaps closing the House of Commons bars might do the country some good), but banning drink from football grounds, just like closing the pubs at 11pm, is a pointless and counter-productive exercise. I'm too young to remember drinking at football grounds but I'm told the queues were so long it was impossible to get drunk.

Enough. We drank our beer, discovered that the froth gets stuck on your beard and took our seats like good citizens. We didn't attack anyone.

Everyone was tense, smiling and having fun. Four-year-olds and grannies joined in the endless choruses of 'Goodnight Irene' (the Bristol Rovers' song) that filled the stadium.

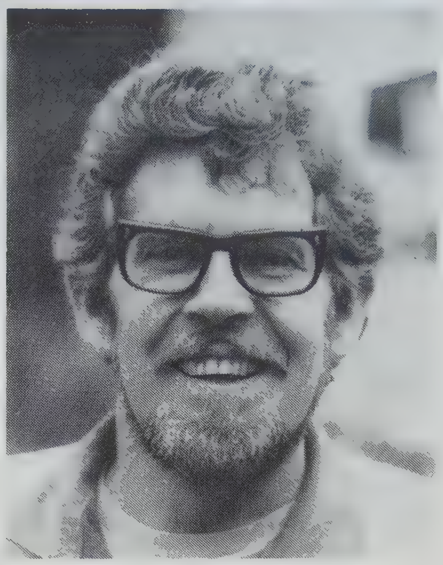
The match began in an air of unreality. Tranmere settled first and scored first. For a minute we heard Merseyside voices. The first half passed in a blur and we were subjected to that sodding military band music at half-time, but even *that* couldn't dampen our spirits. Gerry Francis (who walks on water as far as half of Bristol is concerned) gave his customary inspirational half-time talk and Bristol Rovers came out for the second half like men possessed.

Many managers are reviled, most are tolerated, a few loved, but none are worshipped as Gerry Francis is at Bristol Rovers. Francis came to Rovers as a player whose legs had gone and proved that you don't have to run around like a blue-arsed fly to play Third Division football. He used his brain to make space for himself to dominate the midfield. Gasheads (Rovers fans), unused to such quality, adored him but the club was in crisis. With no ground of their own, Bristol Rovers were forced to share Twerton Park, non-League Bath City's ground. Bankruptcy loomed ever closer and the club were losing £5,000 a week. Crowds had dwindled to around 3,000 which was hardly surprising since the team (Francis excepted) was frankly crap and narrowly escaped relegation to the Fourth Division. Barring a miracle Bristol Rovers Football Club would be wound up within a year. The club could no longer afford Francis's wages so the supporters banded together to pay them. Francis never forgot that loyalty and one of his first acts on being made manager was to put up his own money to buy back Ian Holloway, a Rovers stalwart, from Brentford. In the 1988-89 season he led a team costing £20,000 to the Third Division Play-Off Final.

Francis rejected the assistant manager's job at Spurs and the managers' jobs at West Ham (surely the best job in football) and Portsmouth. The 1989-90 season saw Rovers win the Third Division championship, reach Wembley and finish the season with £2,000,000 in the bank towards a new stadium in Bristol. Gerry Francis is no ordinary manager.

The equalising goal came early in the second half through Devon White. The trouble with Devon is that his first, second, third and fourth touches let him down. Defenders never know what will happen next and nor does Devon. The goal was typical: Devon controlled a fine cross with his throat, played a one-two off a Tranmere man's back and volleyed home from 20 yards. 33,000 people hysterical. I began to cry. We stood and shook with excitement.

Devon White



"Well, we're all Rolfed up, and we're gonna win the Cup, Wemberlee, Wemberlee"

Carl Saunders turned and shot from 25 yards and the Tranmere crossbar rattled. Bristol flooded forward and failed to score. Tranmere Rovers broke and scored their second, and we didst rend our beards in anguish. The referee blew for time. Where had the match gone? It seemed impossible that we had watched an hour-and-a-half of football. The game had been excellent. Tranmere played better and deserved to win. The Tranmere players came up to the fence and shook hands and commiserated with disconsolate Bristol Rovers fans who cheered them on their lap of honour.

Sir Stanley Matthews presented Tranmere with the trophy and 'Goodnight Irene' once more filled the stadium. We weren't going to let losing spoil our day. Getting to Wembley is a prize in itself. A reward for rainy nights in Rochdale, for windswept tedium in Walsall.

When you support a small club there are more lows than highs but no Liverpool fan will ever know the joy experienced by Tranmere fans when their team won at Wembley. No Arsenal fan will ever have so much fun in defeat as Gasheads did on that same day.

Supporting a small club necessitates a sense of humour. Devon White's lack of ball control would make him the subject of vilification and ridicule in the First Division but you don't vilify your friends, so Rovers' fans just laugh at his mistakes and applaud his efforts. To put up with some of the rubbish I've had to watch over the years you have to have a sense of humour, but when your team does play well and achieves something, the satisfaction is that much sweeter.

Oh yes, my wife gave birth to a healthy baby girl called Devon (well, Lucy actually). Soon she can play with my false beard and one day – when she's old and daft enough – maybe she'll wear it to Wembley.

Matt Stephens

Junior Schooling

Geddes Thompson

These days I suffer at Firhill, but I was raised on Ayrshire Junior football, an enchanting nursery for an embryonic follower of the beautiful game. The very names of the teams were poetry. They still are. None of your utilitarian 'Uniteds' or 'Athletics' in Ayrshire. Instead, the names had a sylvan rural aspect, reflecting the loved countryside where the miners, steel workers and dyers walked their whippets, did their courting and engaged in various illegal activities such as poaching and games of pitch and toss: Irvine Meadow...Kilbirnie Ladeside...Ricarton Bluebell...Ah!

The most legendary of such names was, of course, Glenbuck Cherrypickers, for whom the Shanklys played. I never liked that one myself. Cherry-picking always seemed to me an unlikely occupation in rural Ayrshire. Other teams had majestic, sometimes triple-barrelled, names that rolled off the tongue: Ardrossan Winton Rovers..Lugar Boswell Thistle..Ayr Newton Rovers...Craigmark Burntonians... Go on, try them.

The football wasn't bad either. My own team in those days (and forever) had a relatively unimpressive appellation. Dalry Thistle were my emotional focus from ages ten to sixteen. They never seemed to win anything, which was doubly tragic because the mob up the road, Kilbirnie Ladeside, won loads of things including the Scottish Junior Cup against Camelon in 1952. The only goal was scored by a player called Willie Ash and the headline in the *Sunday Post* next day was 'Camelon's Hopes Lie In Ashes'.

My old man ran Dalry Thistle for a couple of years. At away games he would stand at the barrier and intone the litany, *"player"* or *"official"* as the passengers from the team bus, including me, filed in for nothing. I always wondered why no-one saw fit to challenge the concept of a twelve-year-old boy being an official of a Junior club.

My father saw it as his duty to instruct me in the lore and legend of Ayrshire Junior football and was never stuck for an answer to even the most arcane inquiry. I had noticed, for example, that adjacent to almost every park there ran a burn. This, I was solemnly informed, was a deliberate feature, its original purpose being to facilitate the ducking of referees after the match if they had incurred the wrath of the home support.

There was also much talk of 'break-ins', ie pitch incursions by enraged fans. I went for years hoping to see one, but no luck. The nearest was an afternoon when a referee awarded a second dodgy penalty against Thistle in the space of ten minutes. About a hundred fans ran from the top of the terracing, their customary lofty vantage-point, down to the retaining fence. Just as they reached it, the huge figure of Big Wattie, the local police sergeant, emerged from the stand tunnel. The would-be rioters stopped dead, put hands in pockets, and drifted back up the terracing. Foiled again.

Looking back, I now realise that elements in the local culture were conducive to the production of good footballers. There was, for instance, the potent threat of spending your working life in a dark mine, a thousand feet below the ground, if you failed to attract the attention of a senior scout in your golden youth.

But there were subtler influences. For example, the Ayrshire-man's Hangback. This occurs when two or more Ayrshire men approach a public house. Many intricate manoeuvres ensue, involving sudden changes of pace, the point being that he who first crosses the threshold of the boozer is on the bell for the first round of drinks. And, as we all know, if you don't buy the first round you have a sporting chance of coming out ahead in terms of bevvy consumed compared with financial outlay. Not surprisingly, Ayrshire Junior teams were full of tricky little wingers and half backs who could change pace in football, as in life, very, very well.

Similarly with the bodyswerve. It was necessary in life to bodyswerve past money lenders, insurance agents, shilling-a-week men and rent collectors before they could accost you and demand the sponds. Necessary also to suddenly cross streets, jump over walls and dodge up closes. What was all this but training for the beautiful game?

TRAINING FOR THE BEAUTIFUL GAME?
Nimt

I went back last year to see Dalry Thistle play Vale of Leven in the Fourth Round of the Junior Cup. It wasn't entirely a success: the pilgrimage to the enchanted past turned out to be a visit to the unlovely present. Thistle had acquired casuals and there was also a group called the 'Dalry Billy Boys' who had presumably foregone Ibrox in order to be with us. The chants and songs were those we hear week by week in the First Division. A portly Vale of Leven midfielder was quickly christened 'Fat Boy' and pilloried throughout. Eventually, I caught myself in the ultimate disloyalty, wishing that 'Fat Boy' would silence his tormentors with a brilliant goal.

My younger son, who condescended to accompany me to this blast from the past (he was angling for a new set of golf clubs at the time) was particularly gob-stopped by the vituperative excesses of the oldsters among the home support. Their target was George Coll whose crimes were 1. that he was a good player 2. that he had once played for Kilbirnie Ladeside. A far cry indeed from the days when Billy Walker, our deadly striker of thirty-odd years ago, was known on occasion to run over to the touch-line and warn an erring punter to watch his language.

It's true what they say. Never go back. Never go back....

You can't ignore this page any longer. It's time to do

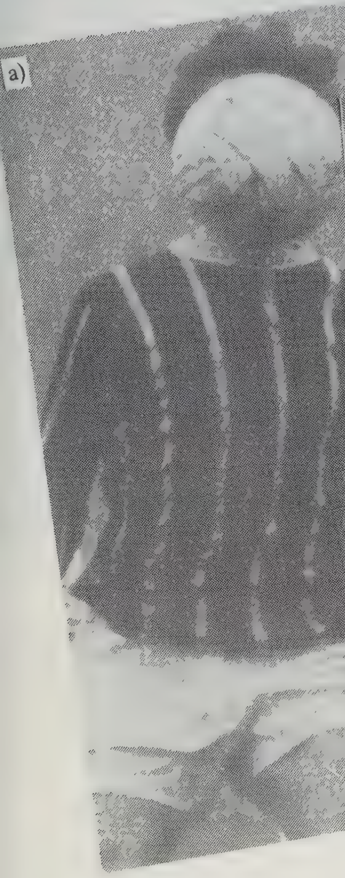
THE QUIZ

1. Which member of England's 1954 World Cup squad became a father at the age of 55?

2. Which non-League ground is featured on the gatefold sleeve of the Rod Stewart LP, *Gasoline Alley*?

3. Who once played at Middlesbrough, Newcastle and Sunderland in the space of one week?

a)



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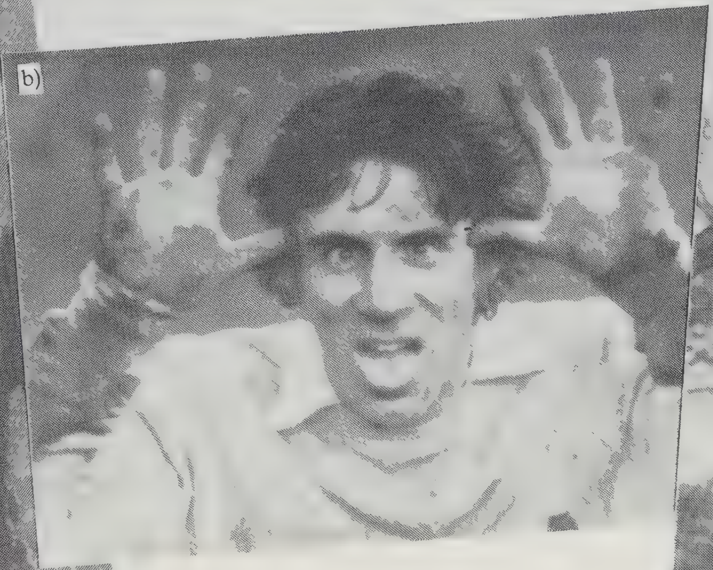

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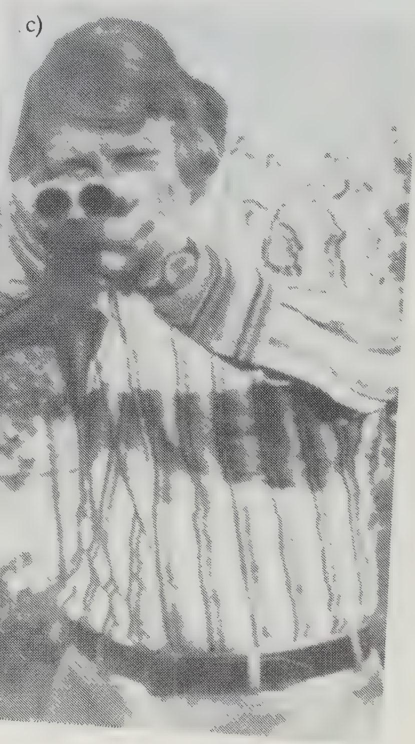


4. What do the following club names mean: a) Eintracht; b) Steau; c) Hajduk; d) Gornik;

5. Which Football League club used four goalkeepers in successive matches during the 1971-72 season?

6. With which League club did JB Priestley once have a trial?

7. The automatic spell-checker on our word processor gave us the following 'alternatives' for the names of some well-known international players. Who is: a) Huge Sundays; b) Vacuumed Bossiness; c) Salivating Stylishly; d) Homely Putridness; e) Careless Vulgarian?

8. Which former England centre half opened a wool shop in Frinton after retiring?

9. Which teams played out the first goalless draw in League history?

10. Name the French international of the 1970s and 80s who was a member of a Trotskyite political party during his playing days?

11. Which Southampton left back was once offered the throne of Albania?

12. Identify the Football League clubs whose badges used to feature the following Latin mottos: Pro Rege Et Lege; Iuvare Non Impedire; Sapere Aude; Vis Unita Fortior; Pugna Pro Patria?

13. Which was the last country to use all 22 squad players during a World Cup Finals?

14. Which one of the 'Magnificent Magyars' of 1953 later became an MP in the Hungarian House of Representatives?

15. Why did Colonel Gaddafi pay for 5,000 Libyans to travel in support of Tunisia in their final World Cup qualifier against Egypt in 1977?

16. Which famous non-League star of the Fifties has had a ring road named after him in Bishop Auckland?

17. Who predicted the following prior to the 1978 World Cup Finals, *"We can win the World Cup. We are convinced we will return with a medal from one of the top four places."*?

18. Which current League club played in Union Jack shirts for a while in the 1890s?

19. Why was White City Stadium used for the World Cup game between Uruguay and France in 1966?

20. Which one of the following has not played in the West German Bundesliga: Ronald Worm; Dieter Trunk; Roland Spott; Ralf Raps; Erwin Blobb; Manfred Pomp; Klaus Funk; Tasso Wild; Dieter Stinka.

21. Name the Torquay United player of the 1970s who was married to *Generation Game* hostess Anthea Redfern before she met Bruce Forsyth?

22. Which club has been the subject of the most *WSC* articles?

Picture Quiz —

Identify the players pictured above

(Answers at the bottom of Page 96.)

Norman Ternahan explains how sectarianism continues to afflict football in Northern Ireland.

Although we sometimes like to think otherwise, the sectarian violence in Northern Ireland, euphemistically known as The Troubles, pervades every aspect of our lives, even our football. Perhaps one should say *especially* our football. Significant numbers of young men have been attracted to football, not through any love of the game, but because of the opportunity provided for tribal confrontation. It is probably a blessing, therefore, that it is over forty years since Belfast had the equivalent of a Glasgow derby.

However, during the first half of this century Belfast Celtic *v* Linfield mirrored all the passion of the Glasgow confrontation. At that time these teams had both Protestant and Catholic players, but Celtic's support was almost all Catholic and Linfield's was certainly 100 percent Protestant. As a result their matches often degenerated into sectarian violence.

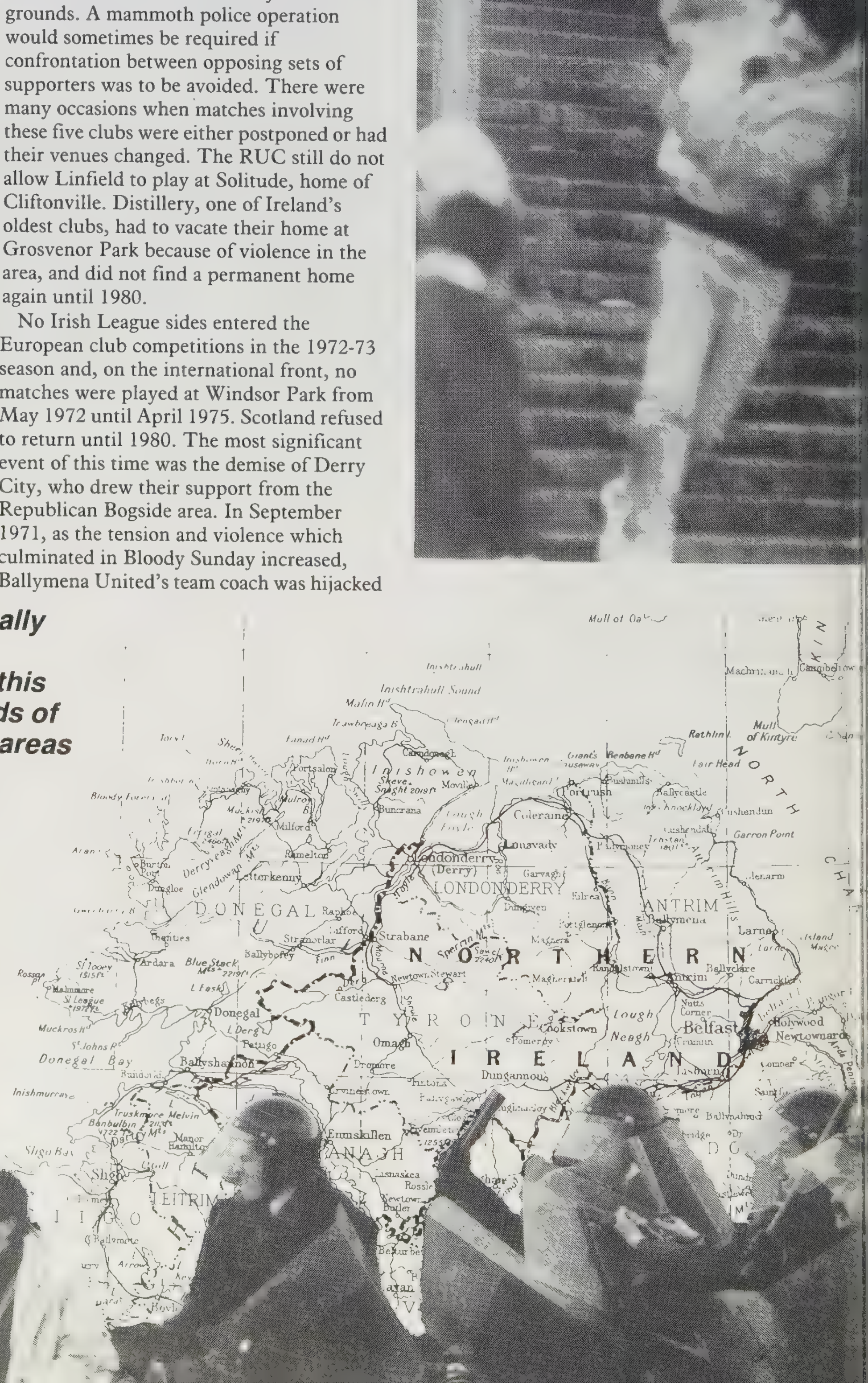
The final straw came on Boxing Day 1948. In the first half of a match at Windsor Park, Celtic's Jimmy Jones and Linfield's Bob Bryson went into a tackle. Bryson emerged injured and had to be carried off. At half-time, the Linfield secretary Joe Maghie made one of those incredible decisions beloved of football administrators everywhere. He added to an already highly-charged atmosphere by announcing to the crowd that Bryson had been taken to hospital with a broken leg. At the end of the match the Celtic players beat a hasty retreat as the Linfield supporters poured onto the pitch. Jones, unable to escape, was surrounded and pushed onto the terracing. When he emerged he had sustained a broken leg, and maintains to this day that he owes his life to Sean McCann, the man who rescued him. The IFA fined Linfield and closed Windsor Park for one month.

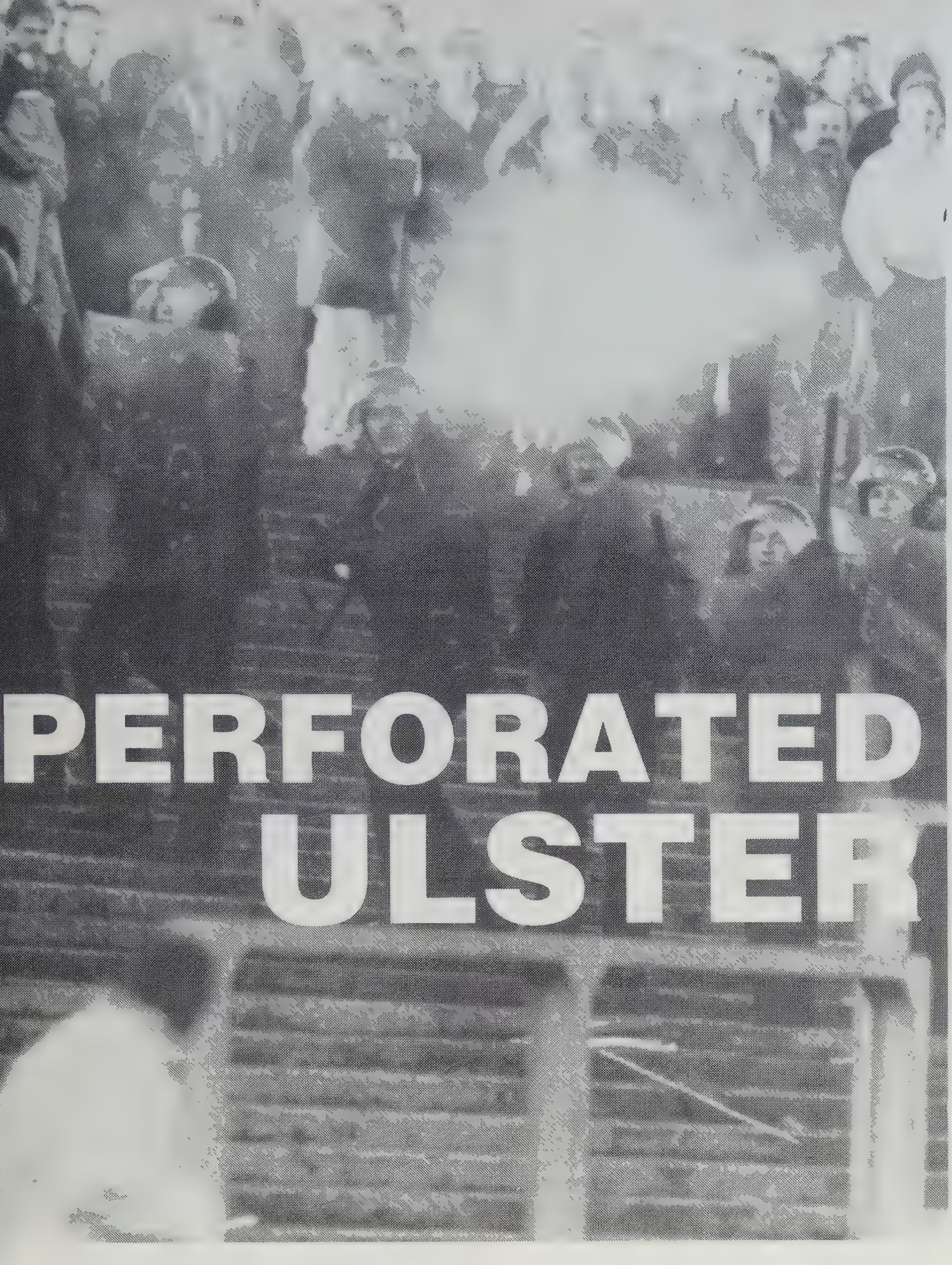
> **"(Donegal) Celtic would normally play in front of a handful of spectators but, of course, for this match they attracted thousands of 'supporters' from Republican areas of Belfast."**

At the end of that season Celtic went on a tour of the USA. As they paraded around the pitch before their first match, the Americans, displaying their typical naivete about Irish affairs, thrust the flag of the Irish Republic into the hands of Elisha Scott, the Celtic manager. A photograph of this made its way into the newspapers at home and the Celtic-Linfield controversy that had rumbled on all season burst into life once again, much of it fuelled by the outcry of Unionist politicians. Upon their return, the Celtic board felt that they would not receive the necessary protection from the IFA and withdrew from the League. They have yet to reappear.

The onset of the current troubles rekindled football's problems, particularly at the height of the violence in the early Seventies. Linfield and Glentoran were situated in staunchly Loyalist areas while Distillery, Cliftonville and Derry played in Republican areas and the street violence was often at its worst in the vicinity of their grounds. A mammoth police operation would sometimes be required if confrontation between opposing sets of supporters was to be avoided. There were many occasions when matches involving these five clubs were either postponed or had their venues changed. The RUC still do not allow Linfield to play at Solitude, home of Cliftonville. Distillery, one of Ireland's oldest clubs, had to vacate their home at Grosvenor Park because of violence in the area, and did not find a permanent home again until 1980.

No Irish League sides entered the European club competitions in the 1972-73 season and, on the international front, no matches were played at Windsor Park from May 1972 until April 1975. Scotland refused to return until 1980. The most significant event of this time was the demise of Derry City, who drew their support from the Republican Bogside area. In September 1971, as the tension and violence which culminated in Bloody Sunday increased, Ballymena United's team coach was hijacked





PERFORATED ULSTER

and burnt at Derry's Brandywell ground by a crowd of youths. The match itself was played with violence raging around the ground, and, subsequently, all parties agreed that football at Brandywell would be impossible for the foreseeable future. Derry played their home fixtures at Coleraine for the next twelve months, by which time they felt the situation had eased sufficiently to allow them to return. However, the Irish League Management Committee vetoed such a move and Derry decided to withdraw from the competition. They returned to senior football more than a decade later — but this time as members of the Republic of Ireland's league.

Riots at the Dundalk *v* Linfield European Cup game in 1979 and the refusal of England and Wales to play at Windsor Park during the hunger strikes in 1981 were just some of the further events which, although less frequent since the early Seventies, continue to remind us that even football cannot be normal here. The most recent incident occurred when Donegal Celtic, a non-league team, were drawn at home to Linfield in the 1990 Irish Cup. The problem was that Donegal Celtic play in the heart of Republican West Belfast and parallels with Belfast Celtic *v* Linfield clashes of the past were obvious. The IFA decided to switch the match to Windsor Park, despite an attempted court injunction by Celtic, although many neutrals felt that it would be better played behind closed doors. Celtic would normally play in front of a handful of spectators, but, of course, for this match they attracted thousands of 'supporters' from Republican areas of Belfast. The inevitable confrontation with both Linfield fans and the RUC resulted, and we had the sickening sight of a football match being played while plastic bullets were fired on the terraces. Sixty people were injured that day.

Most Irish League clubs have a support which can be identified as being either mainly Protestant or mainly Catholic. Indeed, some supporters seem more intent on displaying their political rather than club affiliations at matches. A section of the supporters of my own club, Glentoran, appear bedecked in red, white and blue (the club colours are green, red and black), while Cliftonville, who play in red and white, have followers who turn out in the green and white hoops of Glasgow Celtic.

Of the clubs currently playing in the Irish League, it could be argued that Cliftonville has suffered most. It is the oldest club in Ireland and the last Irish League side to give up its amateur status. In the post-war era, they met with little success, regularly finishing well adrift at the bottom of the league, until they won the Irish Cup in 1979. Their success naturally attracted extra support, but,unfortunately, this included a hooligan element from Republican areas of Belfast, the 'Red Army', whose continued presence makes it unlikely that the RUC will permit the return of Linfield to Solitude. All league games between the two clubs have to be played at Windsor Park. The Red Army's behaviour attracts the attention of the media and those outside the game, giving Cliftonville an image which their long and proud tradition does not deserve. Supporters of clubs like Leeds United and Millwall will no doubt sympathise with the frustrations of real Cliftonville supporters.

All this would seem to paint a fairly bleak picture, but I firmly believe that there are grounds for optimism. The Reverend David Armstrong was a Presbyterian Minister who was hounded out of his church after paying a Christmas Day visit to the local Roman Catholic chapel. He also spent a period as chaplain of Glentoran, and in a recent interview with the *Belfast Telegraph* made a point of saying that it was gratifying to see how everyone at the club could work together, irrespective of religion or background. This is not peculiar to Glentoran but could be said of almost any Irish League club. Even at Linfield, there have been signs of a thaw recently. After many decades of having no Roman Catholics at the club, Antoine Coly, a Roman Catholic from Senegal, played for them during the 1988-89 season. If this more liberal attitude could be extended to the signing of local Roman Catholics then it would be an enormous step forward, not only for Linfield but for Irish League football in general.

"It is probably a blessing, therefore, that it is over forty years since Belfast had the equivalent of a Glasgow derby."

In countries afflicted by political turmoil, it is often suggested that sport can act as a bond between people. In Northern Ireland the Gaelic games are unlikely to do this for obvious reasons, and the same can be said of rugby, hockey and cricket because of their mainly middle class base. But football has a passionate following on both sides of our community and we must try to nurture this common bond. And when I hear of Rangers' Supporters' Clubs on the Shankill Road cheering on the Republic of Ireland against England in the World Cup, there is surely good reason for hope.

Norman Ternahan

I've always followed football, ever since I was a little girl when my Dad would take me on the Kippax every week to shout for Man City. It never crossed my mind that football wasn't for girls. Though away matches or local derbies were out of bounds, the same restrictions applied to my brother. I never questioned why there were more men than women at football matches. Those were the days with no fences, no segregation and an average of 35,000 at every home match.

Over the last couple of years I've watched Sheffield Wednesday, still standing up on the Kop like I was brought up to do. I've always felt at home on the terraces, always felt safe. Last season had the potential to be different. There were now two of me to think of.

My baby was due on May 24th: two weeks after the end of the season and two weeks before the start of the World Cup. Perfectly planned! As my hormones were jumping up and down with excitement, Wednesday were starting the season in appalling fashion. As I was becoming too tired during those troublesome first few months to contemplate travelling to away matches, the team were going into a steady decline with the journalists predicting after only a few matches that the chances of being in the First Division at the start of next season were nigh impossible. Apart from beating Aldershot 8-0 in the Littlewoods Cup, there was little to smile about.

Such a bad start meant that at three

An Expectan

t Season

months pregnant, initial 'discomforts' as they are affectionately known, were easily addressed. There was always a free barrier at the top of the Kop on which I could rest my growing chest. It was no trouble getting past the small clusters of fans to nip to the toilet at half-time, and in such a large, magnificent stand, it was always possible to sit down for a significant part of the match and still have a really good view.

In November, things began to look up. Beating Liverpool 2-0 and arch-rivals Sheffield United 3-2 were the high points. As I began to bloom, or so the theory goes, the team began to improve. We had some results to be proud of, and Big Ron had made a couple of good buys in Sheridan and King. People were even becoming optimistic. I started thinking of names for the baby. You read about people who name their offspring after whole teams. Was it to be Dalian, Carlton, Roland or even Kevin after our goalkeeper? What if it was a girl? Wednesday perhaps? Ronnie after our glorious manager? I thought not. Having named our cat after Mel Sterland, who promptly left Wednesday after ten years good service, I am keenly aware of the problems of naming your best-loved after footballers. Cats and babies don't often tend to leave you for better financial deals elsewhere like footballers have a disturbing tendency to do.

New Year's Day saw Wednesday beating my childhood favourites, Manchester City. I realised what a precarious state I was in when Kevin Pressman, our glorious goalie, was injured and taken off. My hormones could hardly take it, I was so upset. I just about saved myself from bursting into tears. It was also around this time I noticed that looking pregnant seems to exclude you from being labelled a hooligan. After being prevented from entering Anfield a few years ago for the crime of possessing a can of Coke (*"Well, you might chuck it at someone, luv"*) I have never since dared to attempt to enter the standing area of a football ground with even a handbag, let alone a flask. With a large, protruding belly, I was clearly no longer a threat. Whatever I had in my handbag (or up my jumper) was allowed into the ground with a sympathetic smile from the policeman on the gate. So next time you want to sneak in one of those illegal and highly dangerous inflatable bananas, you know what to do.

On January 6th we beat Wolves away in the 3rd Round of the FA Cup. Contingency plans were developed with my over-excited mates as to how we would cope if I went into labour at Wembley. Such optimistic plans failed to account for the bad luck of the team. By the end of the month, Everton had knocked Wednesday out. It was about this time that the midwife dealt the harshest blow. The ante-natal classes designed to prepare me and my partner for the delights of childbirth were scheduled to take place at 2pm on Saturday afternoons. We were to miss the last few matches of the season which, it could be predicted, would be crucial to Wednesday's survival.

By the Arsenal match in mid-February, where a triumphant own goal after fifteen seconds led to Wednesday's victory, I was beginning to find it difficult to stand up for one and a half hours. (Some would say I wasn't the only one, but at least I had an excuse!) It was time to do the ultimate, pay out £8.00 to sit down in the stand. On March 3rd, I went into the North stand for the first time and sat down to watch Wednesday beat Derby County. I couldn't believe the luxury! The poshness of it: so many women's toilets and with toilet rolls and mirrors! It was a new world, like no facilities I'd ever seen in my years of standing on the terraces. Clearly women can have facilities if they're prepared to pay for them. An expensive afternoon's entertainment was well worth it for Sheridan's first League goal, and a good performance from the team as a whole. A win against Man Utd followed, us again watching from our privileged position.

The end of March saw the start of the dreaded classes. As Wednesday were losing against Southampton and Spurs, at home I was practising how to push and pant and spot those tell-tale signs of labour. As the end of the season was drawing near, rather than sweat out every point on the terraces, my boyfriend was (reluctantly) attending the classes with a number of embarrassed looking men. I suppose Trevor Francis, our latest signing, would have scored out of shock if he'd realised there were male Wednesday supporters at ante-natal classes just up the road.

"My baby was due on May 24th: two weeks after the end of the season and two weeks before the start of the World Cup. Perfectly planned!"

All was planned for the last match of the season at home to Forest. We had tickets in the North Stand and, as my Dad pointed out, as a result of the disaster there would be sure to be an ambulance in the ground if the shock of Wednesday staying up or going down became too much and sent me into labour. Little did I expect what the cruel hand of fate would deal to Wednesday fans on that day. I have never seen so many grown men cry.

So it's the Second Division for us. And for me? Well unfortunately, Wednesday are not one of those enlightened League clubs that provide creches for their fans' children whilst matches are on. At least ten League clubs (including Millwall and Birmingham City) provide such facilities and no doubt benefit from the positive publicity they gain as a result, as well as having more active female supporters. My days as a regular attender, though, are somewhat limited.

In my experience there are two major things that keep women away from football. The lack of facilities and the over-exaggerated and often false images of trouble portrayed within the press. As regards the latter, I've never had any trouble from male football fans in all my years of attending matches. I'm not saying that football fans are angels, but rather that I've always felt safe standing on the terraces, and safe enough at football generally to attend all the way through my pregnancy.

It concerns me that the responsibility for the limited number of women attending is, like any other perceived 'problem' within the game, placed with the fans. The real responsibility lies elsewhere. Take Sheffield Wednesday as an example. The attitude of Ron Atkinson towards the role of women in the game is more offensive than anything about women I've ever heard on the Kop. I'm sure women fans are treated a lot better by male supporters than directors' wives are by the men who really run the game. With such patronising attitudes emerging from those in the limelight and those in control, how are things supposed to change?

But I'll be back. In a few years' time, of course, when I'll take my kids on the terraces to shout for their team just like my Dad took me. That's if terraces still exist. And if ordinary fans can still afford to go.

Cathy Cassell

In The City

It was October 4th 1968 and I had it all. A haircut short enough to align me with the increasingly popular 'skins' but not short enough to be suspended from school; a copy of *Tighten Up, Volume One*; bleach faded Levis, Monkey Boots, tablecloth Ben Sherman; a ski jacket and more Subbuteo teams than anyone else in my class. I though I had it all, that is until the next day.

Sure, I'd been to football before. Football had played a part in my life almost since I appeared less than fresh from the womb, except that I had no intention of fulfilling my father's birthday prophesy; that one day I would play for Aston Villa and England.

He tried his hardest, the old man, dressing me in claret and blue and placing me before some monstrosity of an old leather 'caser' in the garden of our flat in (of all places) Aston, whilst chanting the magic word *"Kick...kick...kick..."* and I did kick, except that the caser didn't move and I did, usually round and round in tiny circles clutching my aching foot.

Thinking that if the caser couldn't be moved by Mohammed, he'd better take me to the mountain, we started to make regular trips to Villa Park on Saturday afternoons, except that I missed the point and chose to collect empty Bovril cups, turn them upside down and then jump on them, to make a farting noise. He raved about Dougan, Broadbent, McParland, Crowe, Hitchens, Lynn, Hateley and Woosnam and I did sort of worship Phil Woosnam, but that was only because he had an even dafter haircut than Derek Dougan. My dad finally gave up on me in 1966 when, during England's finest hour, I preferred to play with my Action Man.

On October 5th 1968, I added the final piece to the jigsaw, which meant social respectability at the Duddeston Manor Bilateral School, when I went with 'the boys' to St Andrew's to witness Birmingham City play Fulham in what turned out to be an exciting Second Division fixture. The game had everything...goals! Nine goals in all with Birmingham scoring five. Excitement! A game that went from 3-0 to 3-3 to 4-3 to 4-4 to Greenhoff missing a penalty and finally a well deserved 5-4. Heroes! In the Birmingham team we had golden boys like the aforementioned Greenhoff, Johnny Vincent, Trevor Hockey, Phil Summerill...But most of all I suppose it was the kit. Well, it was so nice...royal blue shirts and shorts, white socks...How could you not like a team in so smart a kit? From that moment I was hooked and only missed one home game in seven years before leaving Birmingham for the greyer pastures of London in 1975.

In many respects these were the golden years of being a Beau Brummie, True Blue, City Boot Boy, whatever description you would like to give to a Birmingham supporter of that time.

There was excitement! How could there fail to be excitement when you were a myopic pseudo-skin who refused to wear his National Health-like glasses and was rarely able to distinguish Birmingham fans from anything else in a pair of Doctor Martens?

The inevitable occurred with Trevor Francis becoming Britain's first one million pound player during the mid-1970s. How could they sell the player that had meant so much to all the fans? How could they sell the one thing which gave us any sort of credibility in the footballing world? How could they sell the one reason that many of us turned up for?

I emigrated to Australia in 1985 and professed to be a Birmingham fan despite the fact that Altrincham beat them at home in the FA Cup that season. I came back briefly due to a family illness in 1986 and wondered why I bothered to persist with the team and then, finally, in the last months of the decade, I returned home again.

> ***"In many respects these were the golden years of being a Beau Brummie, True Blue, City Boot Boy, whatever description you would like to give to a Birmingham supporter of that time."***

There was the excitement of arriving in some provincial town with a police force of five sixty-year-olds totally unable to control 3,000 psychos who have been given an earache by maths teachers, parents, bus conductors all week, and were desperate to wreak revenge on the entire adult population of Swindon, Burnley, Preston — wherever.

And there was that adrenalin-filled excitement associated with making the safe journey back to the railway station of some provincial town with 3,000 other psychos from Birmingham being chased by 6,000 psychos from Swindon, Burnley, Preston — wherever.

There was the rudest possible introduction to the opposite sex when a crowd of pit boot-clad, quarter inch-cropped skin girls from Leeds fell upon us at a memorable cup tie between Birmingham and Huddersfield in 1970. During the same game there was the humour of being asked by a very nice old gentleman copper if I was a Town Terrier, whilst yours truly was trying to storm the Cowshed with what seemed like a million Leeds and Birmingham combined.

"What's a Town Terrier?" I asked.

"An 'uddersfield Town fan," He answered in the local vernacular.

"No, I am not a Town Terrier," I truthfully answered.

*"Well f*** off up the other end then,"* he told me, so I f***** off.

And, let's face it, there was some success. The team did get into Division One in 1972 and, more importantly, they did so whilst playing the King of Birmingham...the one, the only...Trevor Francis!

I felt an affinity to Trev...we all did, especially City Boot Boys who went to Duddeston Manor Bilateral School, because Trev lived over the road from the school. Idiot Villa fans languishing in the Third Division took to wearing their claret and blue whilst walking past, shouting the odd derogatory remark. Blues fans defended their hero and many a bout of fisticuffs at ten to four — which was both letting out and fight time — was fought over Trev's honour.

My girlfriend at the time, the inimitable Doreen Rogers, worked in a local newsagents and would ring every night to report what Trev had bought that evening. For a footballer, he seemed to buy a lot of Smarties. He also bought the occasional pint of lager at the Ashted Hamlet and even managed to present the Erdington Saltley Cup to our victorious school team. He was part of our lives.

I remember sitting in an A Level Economic History class at the Matthew Bolton Technical College at just gone 12.30 on a Monday afternoon in April. Some seats were empty, their usual occupants being somewhere else in the College listening to the FA Cup semi-final draw.

Then at 12.40 a smiling friend pressed his face to the glass panel in the classroom door and mouthed the magic words *"We've got Fulham"*. A buzz shot around the room and it had nothing to do with the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. We'd drawn Fulham and avoided the other First Division teams Ipswich and West Ham. This had to be it! Wembley and success at last.

But this was not to be. In his wisdom Freddie Goodwin chose to change a winning team and dropped the exciting, young, attacking full-backs, Calderwood and Bryant. The team played terribly at Hillsborough and was lucky to draw; they played excellently at Maine Road and wuz robbed in the last minute of the game by a fluke goal.

Of course, there were a couple of classics at Villa Park. Whilst the Aston club's games against Forest and boring, boring Arsenal may not have been the best Britain had to offer, the Boxing Day fixture against United certainly was. The team's replay against Blackburn in the FA Cup was not too bad either, but the City games over that period....???

> ***"Blues fans defended their hero and many a bout of fisticuffs at ten to four — which was both letting out and fight time — was fought over Trev's honour."***

There I stood in the bog on the Coventry Road against Fulham on New Year's Day 1990. As always, the urine overflowed from the clogged drains and, with no roof over the toilet, the rain poured down on to my already soaked body. After 25 minutes of garbage on the pitch, I decided to go for a pie and had to wait in a queue for twenty minutes beneath the pouring rain whilst a stream of coppers were given free tea and pies before the supporters. To my left, on the wall, a poster advertised the fact that I could get a video of this game from a Manchester address...perhaps the same address that the club held their AGM at?

At the end of my wait there were no pies left, but there were the most pathetic hamburgers you've ever had fresh from a freezer for only £1.20 a throw.

Returning to the Coventry Road End, I stood beneath a roof which had leaked in 1968 and still leaked now and thought *"why am I here? Why on earth am I wasting my time on a club which does not give a toss about me...the other supporters, its players, success?"* There really was not an answer so I decided to leave forever more, never to darken again the terraces of the club which I supported for 22 long years, to no avail. It was only fitting that I leave seeing them play against the team that started it all, Fulham, and that I at least leave on a winning note since the score was Birmingham City 1, Fulham 0.

I arrived home to see Forest play Liverpool live on the box and my mother says: *"So the Blues drew then?"*

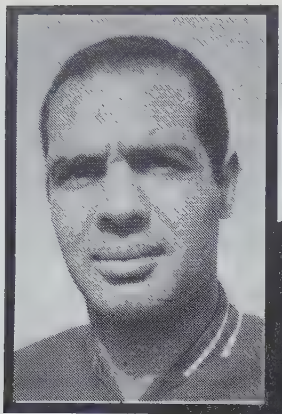
"No", I said, *"they won 1-0."*

But my mother persisted, *"It was 1-1."*

The papers the next day confirmed that she was right! I had left early to get back for the Forest/Liverpool game and the bastards had not even the decency to win for me on my last game!

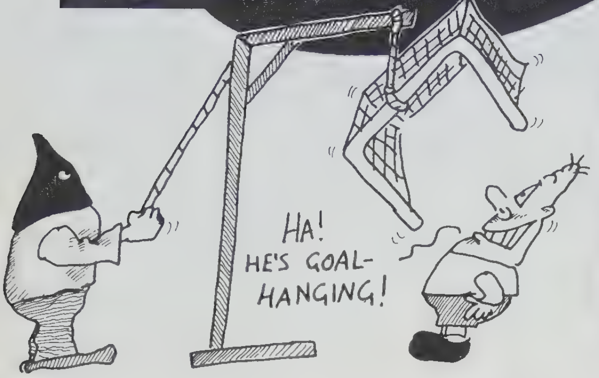
After 22 years I know that my Dad was right. There is only one team in Birmingham and the other one does not give a damn about the supporters who are the lifeblood of any club. I've always been big on loyalty, but draw the line on stupidity. Birmingham City RIP, October 5th 1968-1st January 1990.

S P Faulkner



Morocco's ice-cool custodian

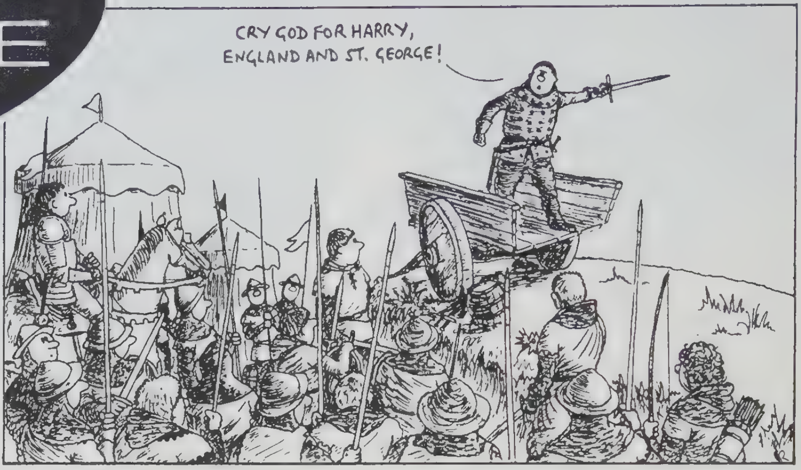
KASSOU ALLAL'S FUN PAGE

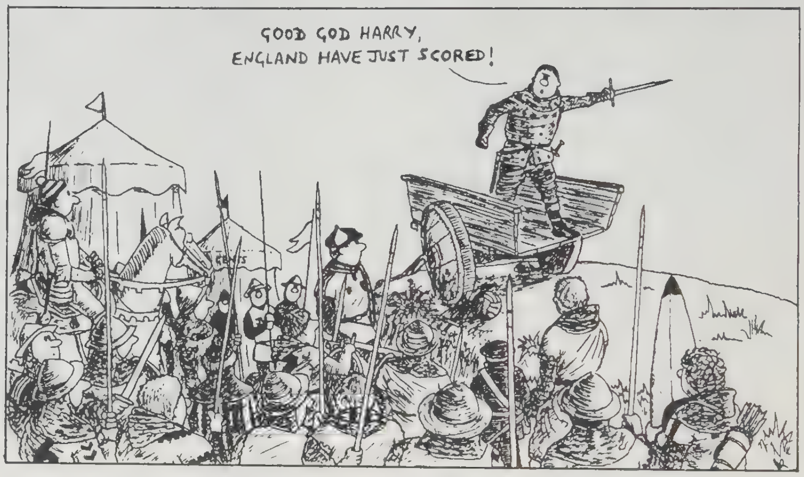

HA! HE'S GOAL-HANGING!

HA! IT'S A DRAW!

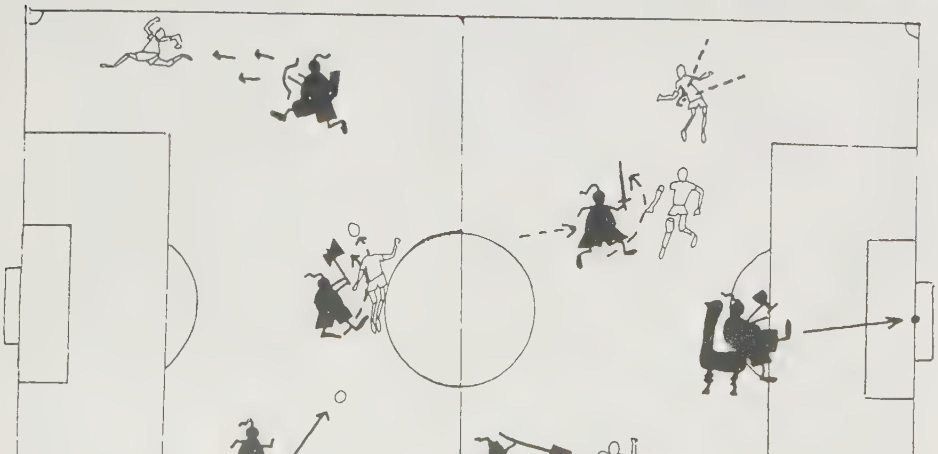
SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Can you spot the difference between the two pictures drawn below? We can't! Crikey, we must be really stupid!

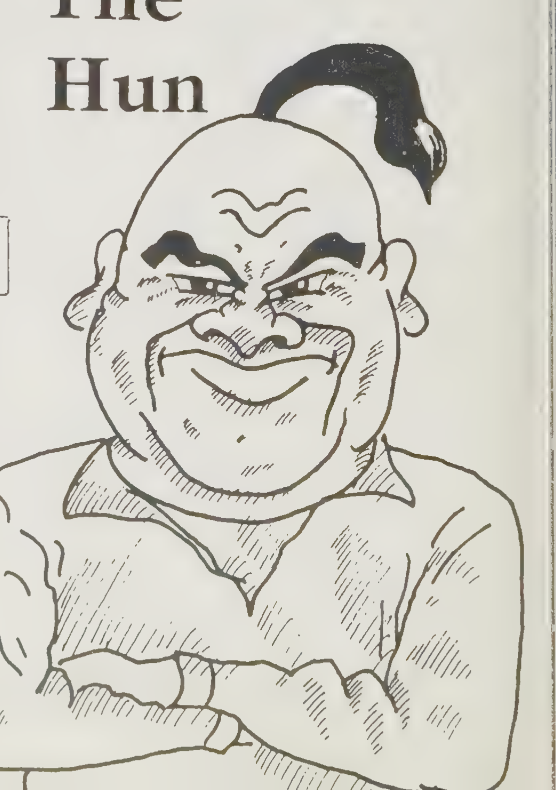

CRY GOD FOR HARRY, ENGLAND AND ST. GEORGE!


GOOD GOD HARRY, ENGLAND HAVE JUST SCORED!

LET'S TALK TACTICS WITH: Attila The Hun

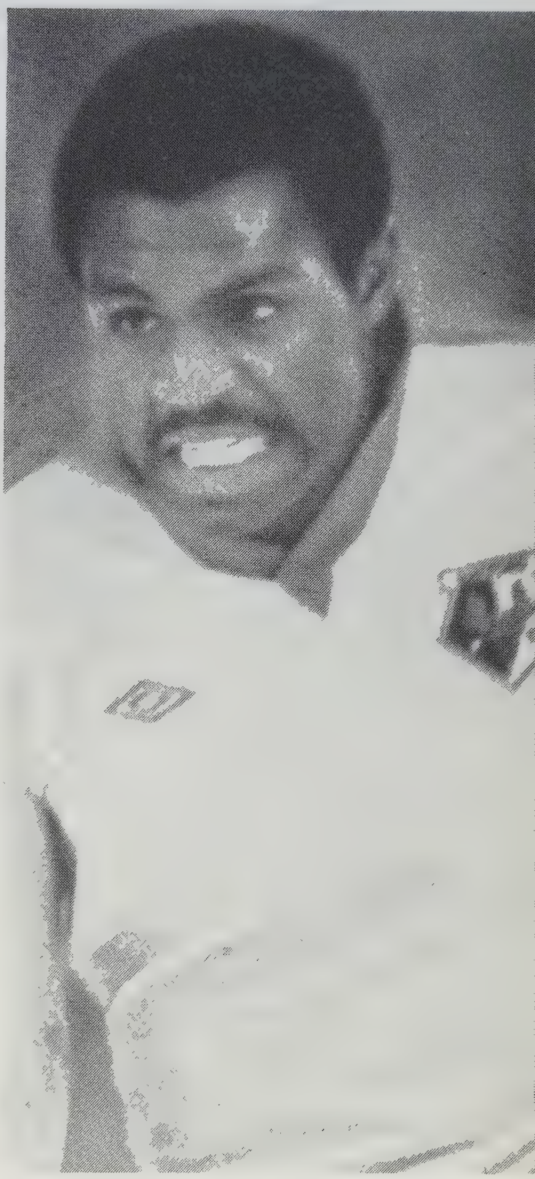


A textbook move from one of Attila's many successful cup campaigns. The left back has been thoroughly stretched and his fellow defenders have been dragged out of position by subtle decoy runs. A masterpiece of offensive strategy.



Bobby Svarc

The triumphs and tragedies of Graham Taylor's early days at Vicarage Road are recalled by two, quietly sobbing, Watford fans.



STARTING TO BUZZ

This is the story of a coming of a God. It's late summer 1977 and Watford are beginning to stir in the Fourth Division. Someone called Graham Taylor has arrived. The local newspaper hasn't followed a winning side for 9 years. It's getting over-excited. A banner headline screams **'Taylor's Hornets Break All Known Records'** and the rag records that they've won, er, 5 games already. And they've only played 6.

So the excitement is building. There's transfer talk in the press. The emotive phrase for the fans is *"strengthening the promotion bid"*. Pardon? Isn't that a bit different from *"selling to stave off debts, despite the threat of relegation"*? What is Taylor up to?

"Watching and waiting" is now the enticing headline as Taylor, interviewed, alludes to a possible loan signing, but expresses caution. *"You are only allowed two loans in a season and only one at a time. Personally, I would be reluctant to borrow a player now. There may be a time later in the season when one might need a loan. I don't want to use all those up."*

We nod to ourselves as we read. Wise words. Wait for the right player to come along at the right time. No headlong rushing. Nothing impetuous.

Then, on September 23rd, the largest and boldest headline of the season so far. **'Svarc To Lead The Line'**

Taylor has clearly pounced. Bobby Svarc is clearly the right man at the right time. And, by all accounts, our line looks like it's going to be led.

Now this may be a new concept to us Hornets fans, but Svarc's pedigree is surely unimpeachable. A much-travelled striker, he has leathered into the onion-bag with alacrity (if not abandon) up and down the country for a whole host of clubs. Sixteen goals in 42 games at Blackburn, fifty-nine in 116 at Colchester. A career total (encompassing spells at Barrow, Lincoln and Leicester) of ninety-six in 226 games. Hell, knowing Taylor's timing, something momentous is bound to happen at home to Darlington tomorrow. Svarc will probably notch his career ton.

We read on eagerly. Svarc has *"earned his reputation largely as an opportunist in the penalty area."* Ooh. A wriggle of delight almost becomes a squirm — this boy's clearly mustard. *"He has scored goals in whatever grade of football he has played in."* Ooh. There it was again — a tingle of anticipation.

We turn up at Vicarage Road, expectant and agog. Bobby Svarc is introduced over the tannoy to acclaim worthy of a goalscorer. A debut or an epiphany?

So, what happens? What happens is that Bobby rates just two more mentions in the local press ever. Let me quote. From the match report: *"A looping shot on the turn from Svarc — which went just over — was his only contribution before limping off. And when he was replaced by Coffill after 37 minutes, the match had the look of a goalless draw."*

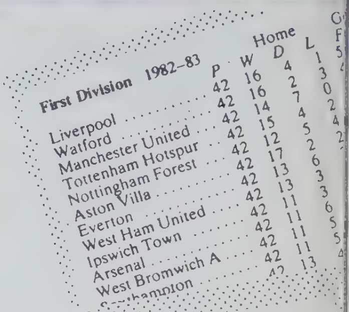
And from a hidden-away news item: **'League "No" On Svarc Deal'.** *"Watford have failed with their bid to have the loan of Bobby Svarc ruled null and void by the League... Watford argued that Svarc, who limped off after 37 minutes on Saturday. cannot really constitute a loan period."*

Such is Fate in football. It can fan flames of hope, only to douse them with one well-timed spit. Just when Watford need a confirmed goalgrabber, Fate works up a deep-throated retch.

Imagine our guttedness. And then excuse our oversight. For, in the very last line of the Darlington match report, there is a description of Watford's 90th minute winner, scored by an unknown nineteen-year-old: *"It struck a defender, looped over the goalkeeper, and there was Blissett, at the right place at the right time."*

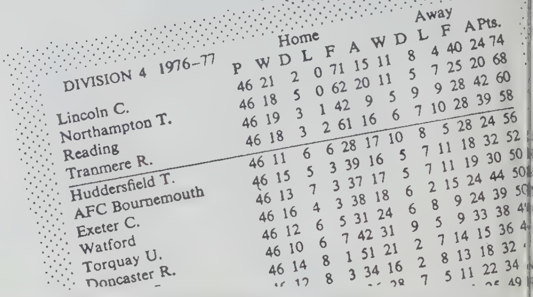
Olly Wicken

Taylor's Dummy



First Division 1982–83

	Home			
	P	W	D	L
Liverpool	42	16	4	1
Watford	42	16	2	3
Manchester United	42	14	7	0
Tottenham Hotspur	42	15	4	2
Nottingham Forest	42	12	5	4
Aston Villa	42	17	2	
Everton	42	13	6	
West Ham United	42	13	3	
Ipswich Town	42	11	3	
Arsenal	42	11	6	
West Bromwich A	42	11	5	
[illegible]thampton	42	13	5	



DIVISION 4 1976–77

	Home					Away					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pts.
Lincoln C.	46	21	2	0	71	15	11	8	4	40	24	74
Northampton T.	46	18	5	0	62	20	11	5	7	25	20	68
Reading	46	19	3	1	42	9	5	9	9	28	42	60
Tranmere R.	46	18	3	2	61	16	6	7	10	28	39	58
Huddersfield T.	46	11	6	6	28	17	10	8	5	28	24	56
AFC Bournemouth	46	15	5	3	39	16	5	7	11	18	32	52
Exeter C.	46	13	7	3	37	17	5	7	11	19	30	50
Watford	46	16	4	3	38	18	6	2	15	24	44	50
Torquay U.	46	12	6	5	31	24	6	8	9	24	39	50
Doncaster R.	46	10	6	7	42	31	9	5	9	33	38	
	46	14	8	1	51	21	2	7	14	15	36	
	[illegible]	12	8	3	34	16	2	8	13	18	32	

Sadly, it's all over. The crowds have gone, the style has gone, the discipline has gone, the flair has gone and it looks like the Chairman's off as well. Although Vicarage Road remains a thoroughly civilized place to watch football, it pains me to admit that Watford are now just another Division Two club.

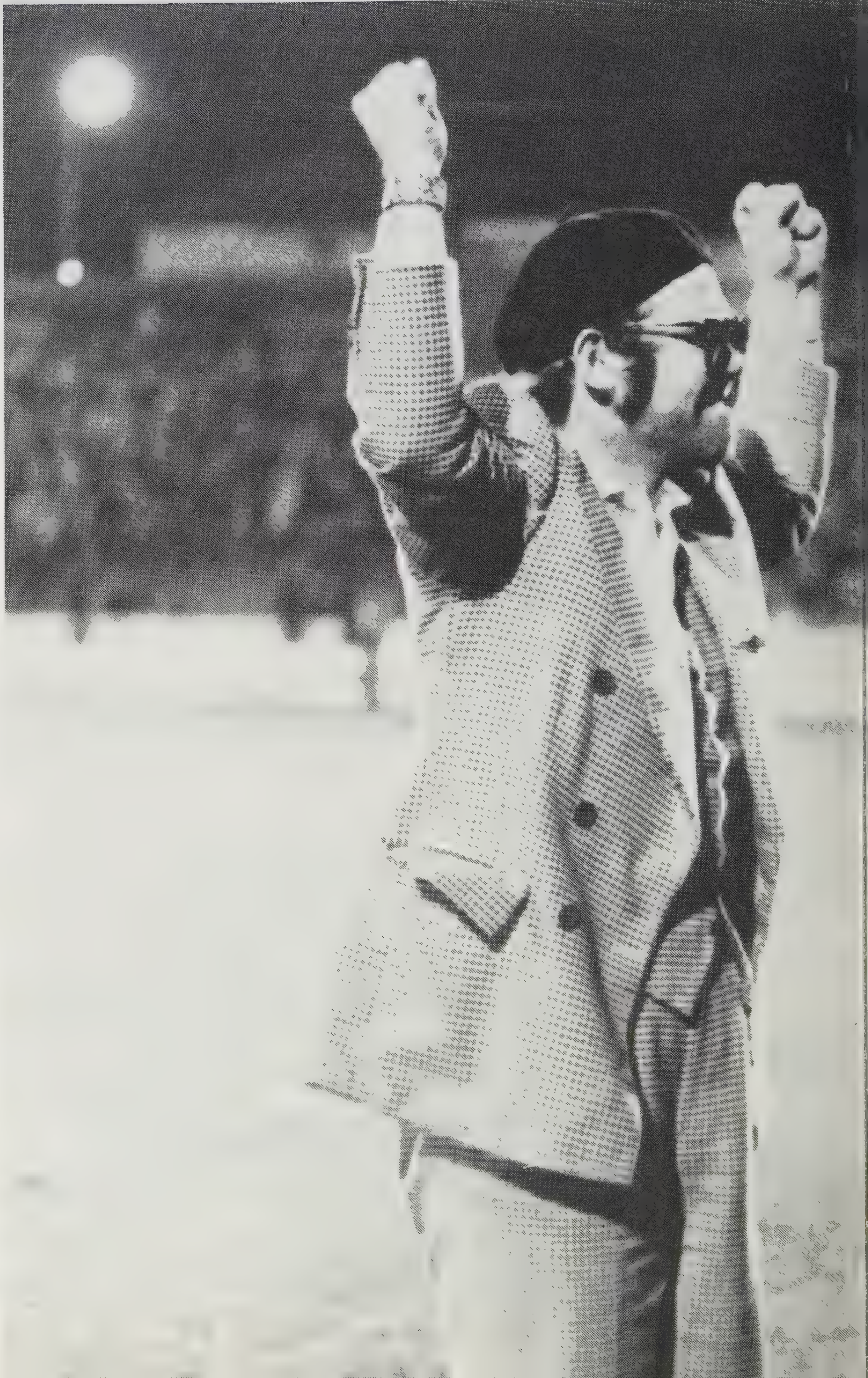
Six ghastly months of Dave 'Call Me Harry' Bassett's bizarre style of confrontational management ripped the heart and guts out of a club that really had something very special, in a way that Bassett never understood. Almost certainly because no-one ever told him.

So — how did it happen? The later years, the Barnes era if you like, have been fairly well documented, but the work began in the summer of 1977. A fan's view.

Over-simplified, it was merely a coming together of the necessary elements at the right time. A Chairman with admittedly big money, but also real, burning ambition. A man with a desire for a local sense of community (in an increasingly soulless town) and the ability, unlike most of his counterparts, to listen and to let the manager manage. Definitely not just money. With his money alone, it would not have happened.

I sense some gentle scoffing from the lower reaches of the League on this point, but it is true. After dismissing the hapless Mike Keen in April 1977, Elton announced to a somewhat less than enthusiastic boardroom his idea for a successor — 'Bogota' Bobby Moore! Mercifully he listened to those around him; Taylor was pursued and subsequently persuaded, thus allowing Moore's promising Fleet Street career time to come to glorious fruition.

The club in 1977 was run down, but fundamentally decent, honest, and essentially local. A crowd that had declined, through two relegations, to a real hard core. Very frustrated but genuinely loyal. And a playing staff that, although tactically ill-disciplined and generally as frustrated as the fans, was not nearly as bad as the then manager had us believe. Six of them had previously played in the First Division, but more to the point, three of them would



subsequently represent the Horns at that level. The Blissett/Jenkins partnership was on the books, but remained untried.

Finally, of course, it was about a man who made it all happen — Taylor. A man whose powers of motivation in the dressing-room (tea stains on the ceiling etc) were matched only by the galvanising effect of his sheer personality on the docile Vicarage Road crowd. Attendances, in Division Four and Three, of 19,000 and 26,000 respectively, may be no big deal at Molineux....but at Watford!

How did he do it? Easy. He gave the club to the town. A cliche — but a truism. In retrospect his demands were little short of outrageous. Players were forced to live very close to, or preferably in the town and public appearances became a contractual obligation. This provides a sharp contrast with the post-GT years, where the manager has had more local visibility than the rest of his staff added together and half the current back four travel in from somewhere called Essex.

Under Taylor, the staff toured local factories and offices. No reasonable requests were refused. Startled writers of letters to the local paper were telephoned at home by the manager. Suddenly we really were all in it together. And the team, mostly the inherited team, were doing the stuff. Playing to their strengths, running until they dropped, withstanding pressure and quite clearly enjoying every second.

The crowd responded to the team; the team responded to the ever-increasing crowd; and the Chairman set it alight. Elton must now cringe with embarrassment when he recalls joining Taylor on the bench during a first round League Cup replay with Reading. He leapt around, inciting the crowd to get behind the boys. Taylor appeared less than delighted, but how the fans loved it. For the first time ever, the Chairman was a real supporter.

Within months we were taking thousands to away games, including a brilliant cup-tie at Upton Park in front of 36,000. A decent West Ham side won 1-0, but everyone there that day realised that Watford were far too good for Division Four — and so it proved. The success of my small wager, struck at 12/1, was never in doubt.

The impetus probably carried them straight through Division Three — but only just! *Rothmans* confirms that after mid-September they were never out of the top two, but it didn't feel like that at the time. It remains the most tense season I have experienced in thirty years of following the Horns. Somehow it seemed essential that the momentum was maintained with another promotion.

Early on it was brilliant. Half of the first ten games saw them score four or more — Jenkins alone had scored twelve League goals before September was out — but gradually the fours became twos and then ones and the wins became draws. A particularly severe April attack of the wobblies saw one victory in six and a consequent requirement to win the last three games, including a tough visit to Hillsborough. Suffice to say that the late winner by Ian Bolton in that game and the final glorious 4-0 spanking of Hull rank as highly for me as the more conventional memories of Wembley, Division One and Europe that followed some years later.

There followed a pause for breath and some re-grouping. They became a not very good Division Two side, experienced a couple of pretty drab seasons at that level and showed signs of getting stuck until, as if by magic, Barnes and Callaghan appeared. Taylor announced, **It's Time We Were Moving On** in the local paper and inevitably they did. Little did we know at the time, but the fun was only just beginning. Still, I mustn't be greedy. Someone else can tell you what happened next!

"There is plenty that is still uniquely right about the club. But nothing could ever match the Taylor years. And we were there."

Ultimately, though, it was ten years of Taylor, all bar a few days. For supporters fortunate enough to have been there, more than a lifetime of deserved football experience, condensed into a decade. Since he went, we've started to repay that debt to the rest of the League — recently in quite sizeable instalments.

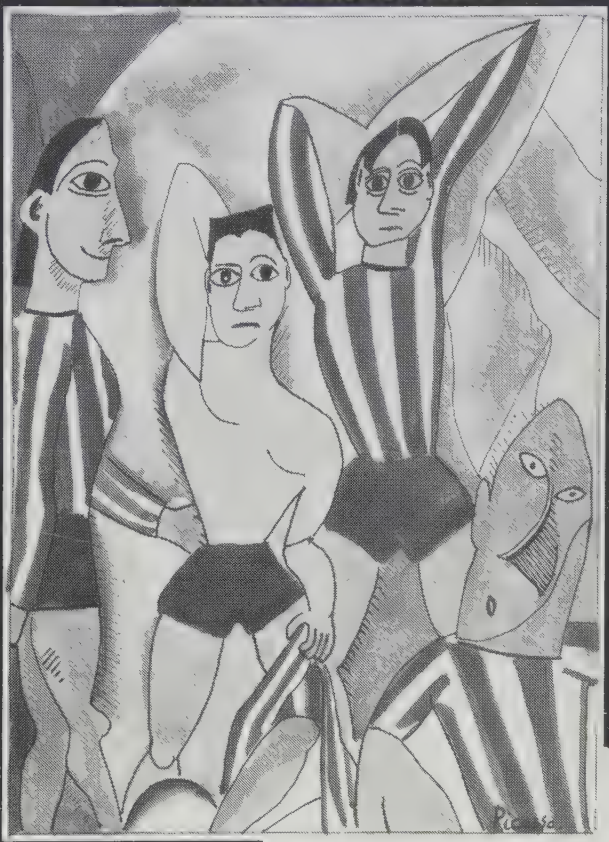
Now don't get me wrong. GT's legacy is a club where watching football remains a pleasure. Today, after every home game, you can see the legendary Ross Jenkins shuffling off down Vicarage Road. There is plenty that is still uniquely right about the club. But nothing could ever match the Taylor years. And we were there.

The end of the story? No fear. Shift over Robson, it's time we were moving on.

David Harrison

Soccer Gallery

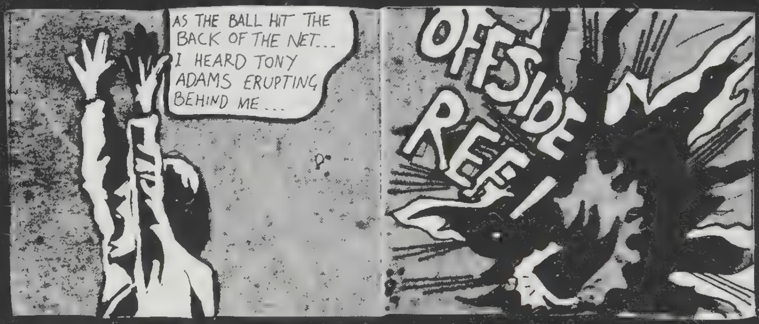
'Lincoln City Changing Room'



PABLO PICASSO

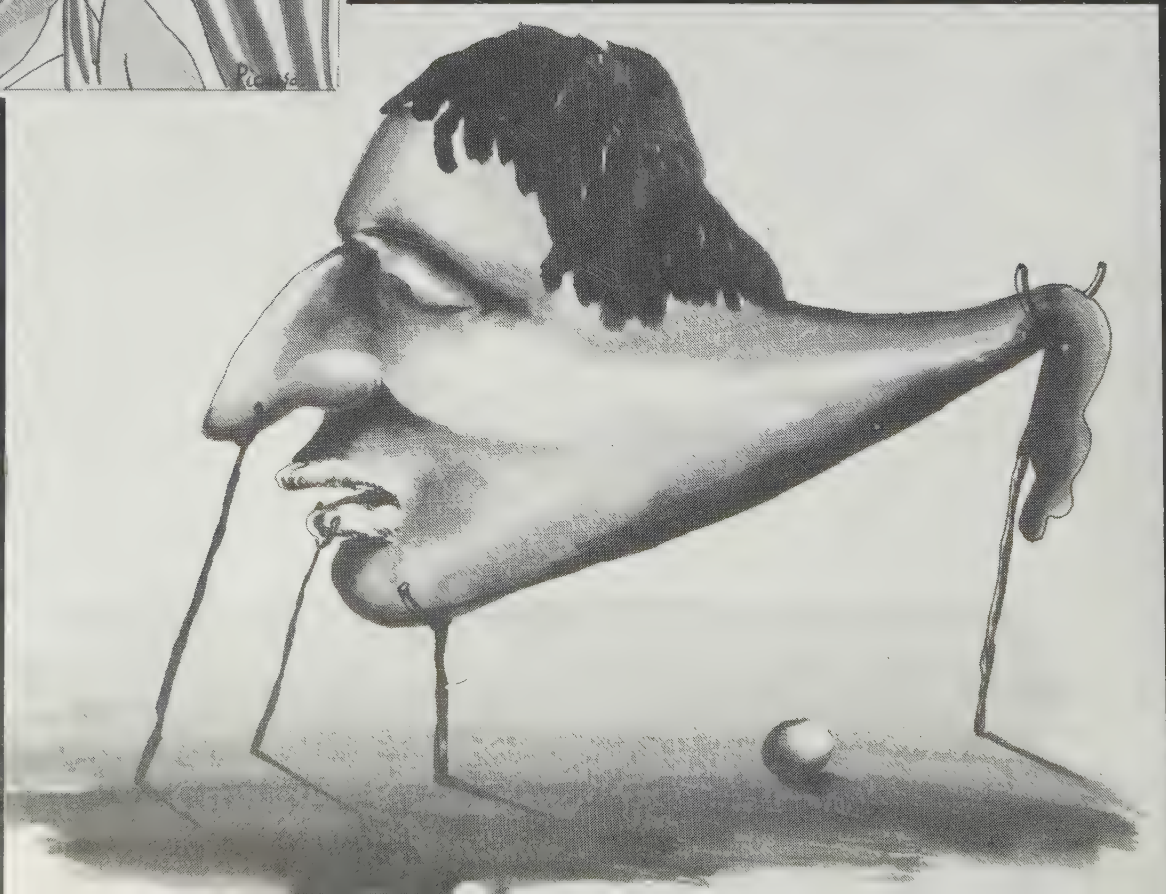
'Mike Pejic'

FRANCIS BACON


AS THE BALL HIT THE BACK OF THE NET... I HEARD TONY ADAMS ERUPTING BEHIND ME...
OFFSIDE REF!

'OFFSIDE REF!'

ROY LICHTENSTEIN



'Mike Summerbee'

SALVADOR DALI

ENGLAND EXPECTS . .

Has the England national team ever really been the best in the world? Cris Freddi doesn't think so...

Ho hum. Another World Cup, another nearly but not quite. This time more nearly than ever: a Bodo's leg away from proving the great truth. Invented the bloody game. Best in the world. As it was in the beginning, so it nearly is again.

Ah yes, the way we were. Heady days. Never mind that we never really were, at least not since God knows when, and God knows when ended seventy years ago. A war came and changed everything. Except the myth.

There *were* dominant England teams, once upon a time. There were six years without defeat, howzabout that, in the 1890s — but there were only 20 games in that time, 14 against little Wales and Ireland. Supremacy at the time depended on six unbeaten matches against the Scots. Best in the world, then — but the world was a titch.

By the time England played any foreign countries, international football had been going only six years — so beating Austria, Hungary and Bohemia (who weren't even a country), albeit by scores of 6-1, 11-1, 7-0, 8-2 and 8-1, didn't prove very much. Total global domination in 1909 meant a single win over Scotland.

After the First World War, even that disappeared. Many more countries played the game, and played it increasingly well: the rise of the South Americans began — and England were never the best in the world once it became a bigger place. Though they never came to believe it. Legends die hard.

1920s

The Twenties, for the England national team, weren't so much a disaster as a bit of a mess. Teams chopped and changed from match to match, 60 players won only one cap each, the home championship was only won once (and that shared) and matches were lost against all three British countries: two against Ireland; four, no less, against Wales; five against Scotland including the 5-1 crash against the Wembley Wizards in 1928. Not even the best in Britain, then, let alone anywhere else. True, yes, foreign opposition was put in its place, but its place was lowly and never pretended to be anything else, the opposition being only France and Belgium, Sweden and Luxembourg, all amateurs playing against English professionals (as their own press pointed out more than once) and not among the better sides in Europe in any case. Had England played the Uruguayans of that time (twice Olympic champions, and World Cup winners in 1930), especially in Montevideo...

1930s

A little better on the home front, worse abroad. Several British Championship titles (though only one outright) and good wins against the Scots in 1930 (5-2) and away in 1939 — but five defeats against Scotland in reply, and several in Europe. Much was made, and still is at times, of an unbeaten home record against foreigners — and certainly no European team even drew a

▶

match here till Yugoslavia in 1950 — but there were secret weapons involved.

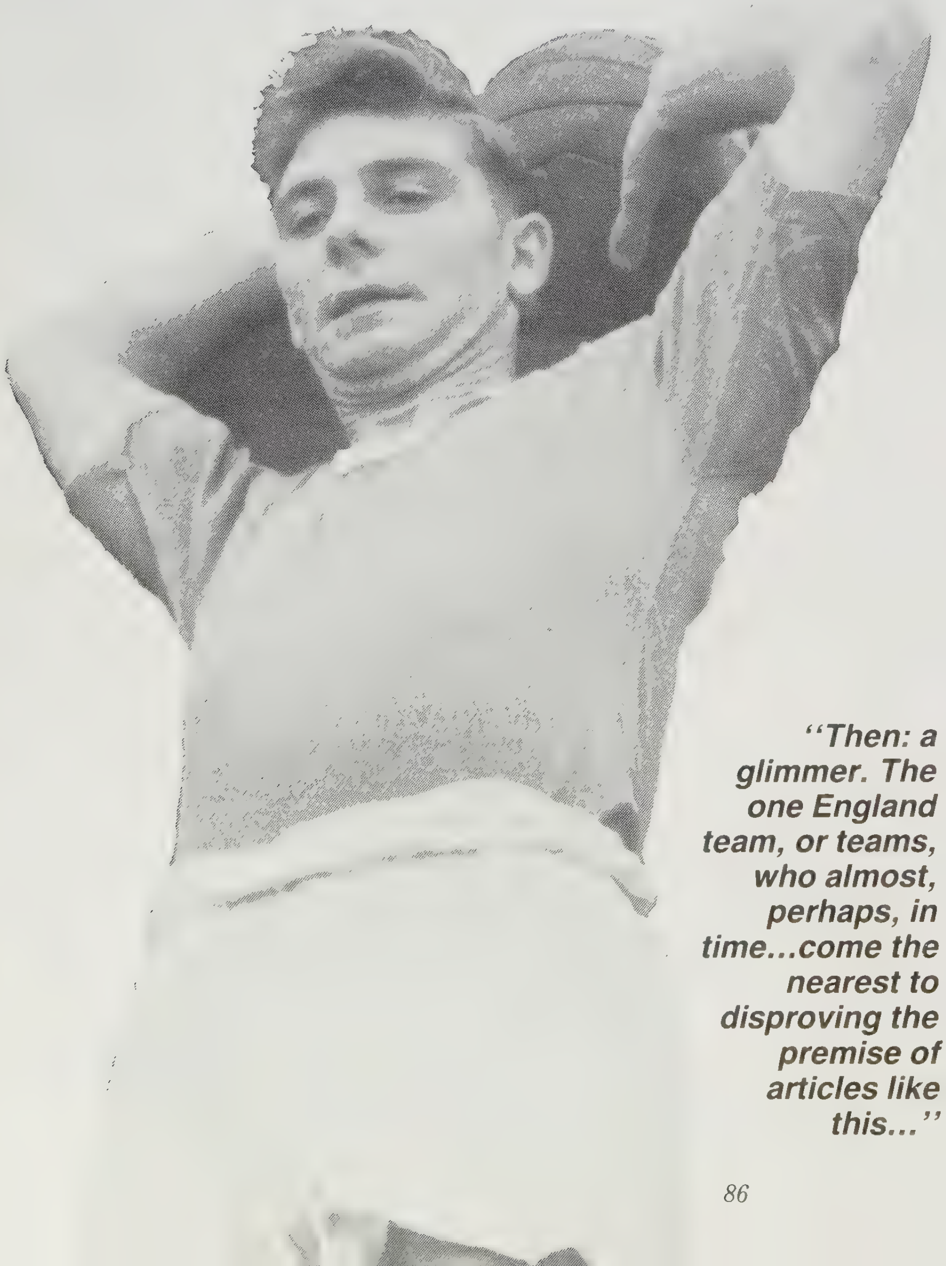
Firstly: mud. Some of the surfaces have to be seen to be believed. Look at the pictures of the 1937 Czechoslovakia match for proof, or France in 1933, or Spain in 1931, when the great Zamora let in three daft goals and England won 7-1. He played in knee-pads that day, but the ground shots came skimming over the quagmire...

Secondly: that great British invention, the shoulder charge. Picture it: Ted Drake and hefty wingers like Ray Westwood and Eric Brook thumping into the goalkeeper, Wilf Copping thumping into everyone else, slim Danubians scattering all over the place. Positive proof that the cross-Channel fuzzywuzzys don't like it up 'em.

The shoulder charge was legal (just), but it's interesting that England used it much more sparingly abroad (read Germany's goalkeeper Jakob on the subject) and ruled out the sliding tackle on sneaky foreign pitches that used grass.

Thirdly: not so much a weapon as a self-inflicted wound. Germany apart, none of the major European teams adopted the third-back game till after the Second World War. Hungary, for instance, came to Highbury in 1936 with their playmaker Sarosi at centre half; no-one marked Drake, who scored a hat trick, and England won 6-2. The pattern repeated itself throughout the decade: let them come at you, wait till their pussyfooting loses them the ball, bang it out to quick wingers like Bastin, Hulme and Crooks, cross for the unmarked Drake, or Dean, or Camsell.

Despite all this, there were some narrow, lucky squeaks: 4-3 *v* Austria, (1932), 3-2 *v* Italy (1934), 5-4 *v* Czechoslovakia (1937) – with the aid of a very rare Stanley Matthews hat-trick, all with his left foot, the winner deflected in by a defender. Away from home, a different story. In the first match against foreign professionals, England were outlasted 4-3 by Spain on a rock hard pitch (Zamora's knee-pads rather more useful on native *terra firma*). After that, defeats against France (5-2), Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland and Yugoslavia, and draws with Germany, Austria and Italy. Hugo Meisl, Austria's famous manager, believed that if England had entered the 1934 World Cup, they wouldn't have reached the semi-finals; certainly they lost to Hungary and Czechoslovakia just before the tournament began.



> "Then: a glimmer. The one England team, or teams, who almost, perhaps, in time...come the nearest to disproving the premise of articles like this..."

Much was made, again, of beating double world champions Italy in 1934 and drawing in Milan in 1939 despite Piola's original 'Hand of God'. But the first match, the 'Battle of Highbury', was won against a ten-man Italian team, who lost their fearsome centre half Monti (crucial to their style of play) within five minutes and went 3-0 down in the first quarter of an hour, pulling back to 3-2 in the second half and being denied an equaliser by Frank Moss's excellence in goal. This in the face of (or the shoulders of) Drake, Brook, Copping...

The draw in Milan was a fine result, admittedly — but does a single match, especially a draw, prove who's the very best? In the next game, England lost to Yugoslavia.

1950s

Well, late Forties first, when England had the remains of a skilful wartime side, still heavily praised today, including supposedly the finest forward line of all. Matthews, Mannion, Lawton, Carter, Finney. Rolls off the tongue. Stuff of old men's dreams. But it never came together for a single England match in peacetime. Shame.

Still, yes, results were good. Only one defeat in eighteen games, and goals galore till Carter, then Lawton, were put out to grass. But camouflage results, for the most part. Big wins — home wins — over France (3-0), Belgium (5-2) and Holland (8-2) were against countries occupied in the war — and occupation brings different and deeper hardships than a blitz; its effects, on morale, manpower, physical well-being, seem to last longer (the Nazis had imposed systematic starvation on the Dutch in an attempt to kill off the Resistance). Added to which, none of these countries had been great footballing powers before the war. You prove precious little by beating them. You have to play the likes of Brazil, brilliant in their own World Cup in 1950 (where England lost to Spain and of course the USA) or, again, the Uruguayans. In fact, England were well beaten (albeit only 2-1) in Montevideo in 1953.

Two individual matches deserve a closer look. Both great victories on paper, both away from home. The first: 10-0 *v* Portugal 1947. Result among results, surely? Proof, if any needed: England still the masters teaching the pupils. Well...to begin with, every Sunday parks player knows how it is: one day you let in a few early goals, and suddenly confidence goes, organisation goes, shape, desire, the lot. Headless chicken stuff. Couple more goals conceded, what's the difference? Portugal did let in those early goals, their organisation did go, they substituted their goalkeeper then their captain, and fell to pieces. Plus they weren't among Europe's elite at the time, no sign yet of Eusebio, Coluna, Germano and the rest. If they weren't exactly a Third Division team as some writers have since decided, they were nonetheless in the middle of a sequence of only three wins in 28 games. England helped set them on their way, and 10-0 is a thumping win, but they were no sort of decent yardstick.

The other match? The extraordinary 4-0 win over Italy in 1948. Now this, surely, this *must* prove topdogship. Look at it: 4-0, against the reigning world champions, a team with seven players from the Grand Torino (all killed in an air crash the following year), in Turin, their own back yard — with a team of Swift, Wright, Matthews, Morty, Lawton, Mannion, Finney. Come *on*.

Well yes, a great win, legendary stuff...except...well, except nothing really, just the impression that it was an exaggerated scoreline and even, absurd as it sounds, the wrong result: a fourth minute freak goal from Mortensen, shooting into the roof of the net from almost on the goal-line, then England taking their chances while Swift and his woodwork kept out Gabetto, Mazzola and co. It happens. Grasshoppers once outplayed Tottenham in the UEFA Cup, queued up to score, Jennings was brilliant, Spurs won 5-1. Bob Ferrier enjoyed the 1948 match, but called it *"a lucky win over a great team,"* and that may be closer to the truth than the scoreline. Anyway, again, one match: does it make you the best? A week before the 10-0 in Lisbon, England lost to little Switzerland...

From then on, the Fifties went downhill fast. The Hungarians came, saw, and delivered the home truth, rubbing it in 7-1 later in the season; the 1954 World Cup challenge ended at the hands of a Uruguayan team with eight fit men; there were defeats in France, Portugal and Cardiff. The post-Puskas hangover seemed about to last forever.

Then: a glimmer. The one England team, or teams, who almost, perhaps, in time...come the nearest to disproving the premise of articles like this...

From 1955 to 1957, England were unbeaten in 16 matches, including excellent wins over Scotland (7-2), Spain (4-1), Brazil — and, away, world champions West Germany. Many goals — and settled sides, with regulars in Wright, Clayton, Byrne, Edwards, Tommy Taylor, Finney, Matthews, then Douglas and Haynes. Looking good for 1958 and the World Cup, the home defeat by the Irish just a genuine blip.

Then: Munich — and the loss of three vital players: Byrne (after 33 consecutive games), Edwards and Taylor, each in a key area of the pitch. Would they have won the 1958 World Cup? A strong settled team might have allowed the young Bobby Charlton to come in and be ace in the hole, as Garrincha and Pele turned out to be for Brazil. Might have. Maybe. Personally, I don't think so, though Munich kept the myth alive: Douglas and Haynes were tired after a hard season trying to take their clubs out of the Second Division, and showed it; England's attack was weak in depth (Kevan, A'Court), unlike Brazil, who brought in Pele and Garrincha, and Sweden; above all, Brazil, experimental and unsettled when losing at Wembley in 1956, were at their peak: a world class goalkeeper, Gylmar, the two greatest full backs of all time (Djalma and Nilton dos Santos), a defence that didn't concede a goal till the semi-final — and *that* forward line: Garrincha, Pele, Vava, Didi, with Zito and Zagalo in support. Too good? Reckon so. Though England held them to a goalless draw, they easily beat Austria and the USSR, matches England could only draw. Possibly Sweden too were a little superior (Liedholm, Hamrin, Gren, Skoglund, Gustafsson), especially in a tournament being played at home. Then too there were the French, with Kopa, Fontaine, Jonquet — and if the Magic Magyars hadn't disbanded after the revolution...

Otherwise, an undistinguished field worldwide, at least before the World Cup — and yes maybe this was the closest England might have come to being The Best, though probably no-one from abroad would agree. 118 years of internationals — and one maybe.

1960s

Walter Winterbottom's skilful attacking side of 1960-61 beat good teams as well as bad, and often by huge scores: N.Ireland 5-2, Spain 4-2, Luxembourg 9-0, Wales 5-1, Scotland 9-3, Mexico 8-0, Italy 3-2 away. The forwards, Douglas, Greaves, Smith, Haynes, Charlton, were high class, and had the 1962 World Cup come a season early, might they have won it? Best in the etc, if only for a year? Again, probably not. Behind the forward line, the team was a bit undistinguished (Flowers, McNeill, Swan) and Ron Springett proved to be a liability in the World Cup, conceding important goals from long range. Also, as the Yugoslav manager said, why was everything Number Ten (Haynes)? Number Ten takes the corners, the throw-ins. I put a man on Number Ten: goodbye England. Words to that effect. Haynes was tired (again) and in poor form in Chile; the whole team travelled badly (as they've done in most World Cups) and were in any case unable to beat Brazil, losing 2-0 in 1959 and drawing with a team of young newcomers in 1963, losing in the World Cup itself and 5-1 in 1964.

Alright, not 1962 then. But there's always 1966 and all that. One last chance and surely the best. They *must* have been number one. They even won the damned thing to prove it.

Anybody believe that? Hand on heart? A tournament played at home, every match at Wembley; unconvincing, grinding win over a ten-man Argentina; the ball that didn't cross the line. If it had been played anywhere else, against West Germany, Portugal, even Hungary? The case for, to say the least, ain't watertight. England weren't The Best in 1966, but Ramsey made a pretty good silk purse — and did well with it through to Leon. None too handsome, as we all remember, but looking the part from time to time. Best in the World on paper, and maybe just a little more than that. But (1969, 1970) there was always Brazil...

1970s

There were no Seventies at all, of course, if we're talking world domination. Unlike the Twenties, a mess *and* a disaster. We all know the litany: failure to qualify 1974, 1976, 1978; put in our place by Netzer 1972 and Cruyff 1977. Oh, and we still couldn't beat Brazil: 1976-77-78. Draw the veil.

1980s

No better. Failure to qualify 1984, edge of disaster 1986, Greenwood letting Howe pick the team in 1982 (Rix in place of Glennda). But oh yes, we beat Brazil (a sort of Brazil) in 1984 and again (thanks to the Hand of Pearce) in 1989.

Now Ninety — and still the myth won't die. A little bit of Gazza and sweeper, and God's just about in his heaven again. How to kill the legend? Well, you need to shoot it full of goals. The Hungarians did, in 1953-4; they put thirteen shots through it and it didn't raise its many heads for several years. But since then the proof's been a bit lacking: only one team (Wales 4-1, 1980) has beaten England by three goals since 1964; West Germany, for example, were dominant at Wembley in 1972, but only won 3-1 and their decisive goal was a penalty; Holland were on a different planet in 1977, but contented themselves with two first half goals; Italy were a far better team in 1976-7, but only qualified on goal difference. Remember Brazil in 1981 (Socrates, Zico, Junior, Eder's outrageous shooting)? They won 1-0, and Withe hit a post near the end. See? They weren't better really. Not so's you could prove it for certain. Not enough to make it *their* game. We invented it, remember — and they can never change that.

England are (just about) as good as Belgium and Cameroon, a bit better than Egypt. England are not the Worst Team in the World. Be grateful and enjoy. It's all we've ever ever ever had.

Cris Freddi

Boy's Own Annual

doctor, I had a dream that a vulture came into my room, ravished me, then stole my Leeds Utd v Norwich 1977 Programme..
Mmm. Did it have any swaps?

There is sensuality in the art of programme collecting.

The appreciation of so many of its aspects – of illustration, graphics, photography, language, perhaps format – are subtle, fine, even hedonistic desires.

Though it is essentially a mail-order industry, the programme world has its Valhalla, a national fair held each June at the Hotel Russell in central London. Otherwise, the calendar is interspersed with a copious itinerary of provincial jamborees and, on the first Sunday of each month, a pleasant soiree at Kensington's reassuringly 'boyish' sounding Baden Powell House.

The national event is, however, the centrepiece of the year, at which protagonists of the hobby emerge in force, descending on the capital to show their colours – like scouts from some bastard offshoot of the British Legion.

The dealers would seem to fall into two categories.

Firstly, there is the family man of a certain age, sometimes corpulent, with a persistently suburban air. These charming fellows have come of age since Richard Briers' *Ever Decreasing Circles* defined the character, giving credibility and realism to their orderly, but sexless, lives.

These are the gentle obsessives, affable, even jovial – a touch of Falstaff about them. At the turn of a page, they will gladly enter into enthused conversation on any subject surrounding footballing printed ephemera. Lowestoft in the Fifties will merely be an excuse to dredge up anecdotes. Warm, benign and parental, a practised Father Christmas.

Theirs is old(e) England. The England of Meredith, Bloomer, Atyeo. Of pottering around in the garden to the theme tune of 'Workers' Playtime', where tea is always on the table and where everything closes at 5pm sharp.

The pre-eminence of 'The Charmer' is today under threat from a relatively sinister new breed of dealer. An executive, still suburban, but caring less for romanticism. All bulk orders and hard sell, they personify the infiltration of this quiet, genteel environment by Thatcher's philosophy.

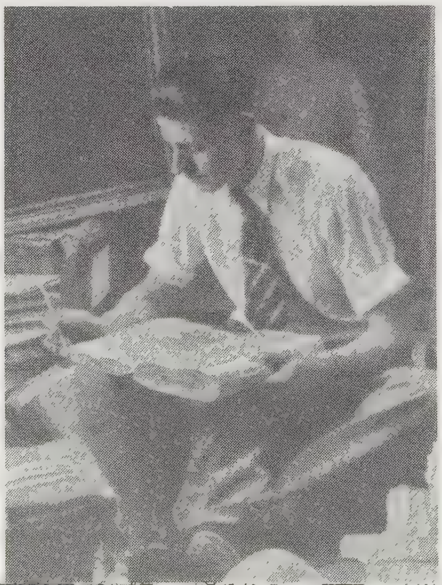
They appear the perfect agents of the modern programme – too often the anodyne, deeply conformist product of the ignorant, insensitive, commercial mind.

'The Gentle' man, on the other hand, will tolerate brashness only in order to subsidise his own specialist, more exotic, lines. The 'young gun' will promote such dull souvenirs with aggression.

Joining a long queue outside the venue, one such dealer could be seen attempting to steal a march on the competition in distributing, by hand, a huge catalogue of concertina-styled computer print-out that, once unwrapped, would stretch from goalmouth to goalmouth.

The document announced the sale of current season issues at knock-down prices for the first half or so. It seemed to me that such a vulgar lottery would not impress this legion of purists, but upon entering the hall I was rocked back on my heels by the sight of the stall in question being shaken from its hinges by voracious punters, abandoning their dignity at first scent of gloss. First blood to the modernists.

A peculiarly high proportion of the public resemble a motley crew of failed actors and hunchbacks. All backpacks, bumfluff and bad breath. Horrible men with appalling dress sense, they have the look of secret drinkers – that terrible, unnatural flush and complexions cratered by warts, fissures and seeping callouses.



Their mad determination betrays the fact that they have never known the touch of a fair maiden. What crime can they have committed in previous incarnations to have offended nature so?

By my left shoulder a man is constantly burping, while behind him, another has a profuse channel of phlegm restricting his nasal tract but will not blow his nose. Someone farts...

Look out for the big-eared children. Brace yourself as they jostle for space down at groin level. Their frenzied persistence is more than irritating and it amused me to imagine that by involuntarily raising my knee – like Basil Fawlty, as if in spasm – the offending morsels would be sent spinning across the room.

Women, indeed whole families, have been pressed into service by dealer fathers – no doubt against a promise to visit some Theme Park in an airless car the very next day. One such trader is surrounded by all of his relatives but will not designate any responsibility. He does not trust them to complete the most simple transaction; viz, *"Mar-tin, Mar-tin"*, they whine in unison, *"how much is Huddersfield?"* The chorus is constant, the man besieged, throttled by chains of his own making.

The pursuit of football programmes can, and should, be the pursuit of pleasure. It may be both scientific and aesthetic – as such, it has much in common with philately and the largely visual appreciation of the film-buff.

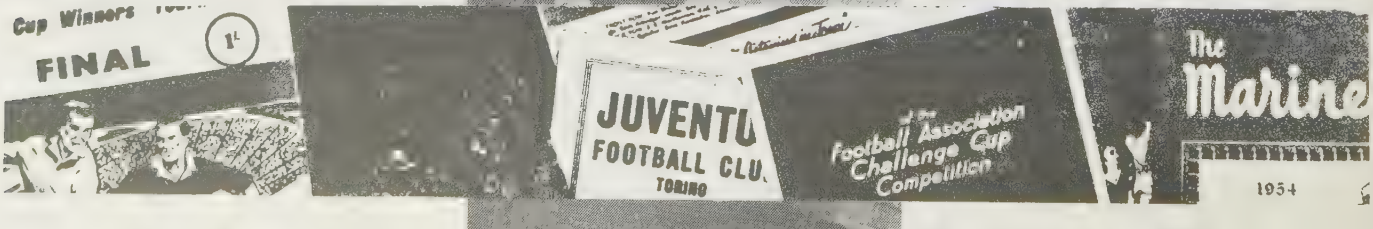
That noble impulse, is, however, countered by the more desperate needs of the multitude of train-spotter types, who would seek sanctuary in the hobby to protect themselves from the ravages of an exacting world. A world in which they cannot compete, cannot find their identity and where failure and rejection are certain.

Sex is the key.

Programmes are inanimate. If they dance at all, they dance to *your* tune. Unlike an actual spouse they will not contradict, humiliate, inflame, blackmail or abuse. Safe, dependable (loving?), some will faithfully devote themselves to one club (one woman?) whilst others demand a broader canvas upon which to sate their ardour. Consider the bordello that is to collect an example of each club in every season.

It may be true to say that collecting and hobbies in general, the penchant for paraphenalia, is an inherent characteristic of the British. The insularity it encourages is deeply unattractive but who would deny a man's right to escape, to wallow in nostalgia if he so chooses? All should have their dreams and reveries.

Mansley Allen



That Sinking Feeling

Steve Marshall

There are many good match forecasts around. The most brilliantly accurate prediction I ever heard came from a re-incarnated Nostradamus the second that Alan Gowling teed off what was to be a woeful Newcastle-Middlesbrough fixture. *"This has the makings of a really crap match."* How right he was. But what was so weird was that the moment he said it, everyone knew the prediction would come true.

> **"This has the makings of a really crap match."**

Perhaps no-one should be surprised at this because the best match forecaster of all lies deep within each and everyone of us; but only ever surfaces to tell us bad news. The danger is at its greatest when the stakes are highest. Right up to kick off you're in an optimistic mood. At some stage well before the end of the game a decisive moment comes when you 'know' your team is going to lose. And when that sinking feeling overcomes you, there's simply no escape. Hope disappears like water through your hands.

At first nothing seems to be wrong. The game is a little uninspiring, but it's only just begun. There's been too little time for a pattern to emerge. Then the opposition scores and how quickly the gloom descends. Suddenly you see the goal for the tiny object it truly is, and begin to wonder just how on earth anyone is going to be able to get the ball into that. However bravely they may hurl themselves into the futile task, they have become trapped in 90 minutes of Hell.

For a moment things begin to look up. A couple of nice moves bring corners. Then, when it looks as though the moment has passed, out of the blue the ref gives a penalty. But you yourself know better, and now the warning lights appear. *"He'll miss it"*, comes a voice from two terraces behind. The ball is hammered hard to the left, but the keeper moves early and chooses to go the right way. *"The stupid b*****d missed it!"* Even the floodlights groan.

As half-time approaches people have begun to console themselves that maybe the team will pull the goal back in the second half. But most of us are far from convinced. It's happened before, but never in such an important game.

The tension begins to mount with the re-start. Now, inevitably, the ref's turning against you and his decisions are becoming more and more bizarre. Self-inflicted baldness is often a consequence of such games. To make matters worse, just when a few threatening moves are put together the linesman's flag goes up every time. The officials are working the fans up to greater and greater heights of frustration. Then, when things are beginning to look really grim, the ball thuds into the post leaving the whole goal shaking. It screams along the line, but just before anyone can blast it home the centre half's despairing lunge scoops the ball clear. It all happened so quickly that the excitement continues for a few seconds after the chance has clearly gone. If you hadn't already got the message, it's in decisive moments like these that you finally understand.

As the game enters its final stages save after save rubs salt into the wound. Desperation arrives amidst a storm of barracking and the last few chances go astray. The normally deadly inside right slices wide of an open goal, hits another straight at the keeper, and finally misses his kick completely. Sitting unseen on the crossbar the little demon of bad luck laughs hysterically and rubs his hands with glee as the final whistle blows.

Thus Tomaszewski was turned from a clown into a genius at the wave of a magic wand. If you look back on that match, England absolutely killed Poland, but any fan could see that Hunter would miss *that* tackle, and Shilton *that* save. Just as Brooking and Keegan in Spain, and Lineker in Mexico would miss their vital chances, too. In Italy in 1980 the moment came when Ray Kennedy hit the post, while in Germany even before Sansom's sliced clearance came back down, you *knew*. So they stood there with their hands on their heads, powerless to break the spell. Doomed.

Some people think there must be exceptions, a time when the feeling turns out to be wrong. I remember a Bolton fan telling me about a magnificent FA Cup 5th Round Second Replay against Newcastle which was played at Elland Road. Newcastle scored first, but Bolton equalised and the game went into extra time. Newcastle scored again and the Bolton supporter described how, for some reason, despair immediately came down. For the last twenty minutes, Wanderers destroyed the Magpies but they just couldn't score.

Finally, in what seemed like the 125th minute, someone like Sam Allardyce smacked a volley in from a half cleared corner. Goal! The Bolton fans were beginning to explode with joy when, through half-closed eyes, they could just make out the diving figure of Mike Mahoney, his back arched like a bow, flying across his goal to desperately claw the ball away....

football and inevitability...

"THEY THINK IT'S ALL OVER... AND HURST'S SCORED AN OWN GOAL, JUST AS THE RUSSIAN LINESMAN HAS CHANGED HIS MIND..."

Let's not beat about the bush. We have all secretly nurtured dreams of playing in the Moroccan Second Division, but Robert Heath has gone one stage further...

BAZAAR GOINGS-ON

For a couple of years at the end of the Seventies, while I was ostensibly employed as the Athletic Director of the American School of Tangier, I played in the Moroccan Second Division for Renaissance Sportive de Tangier. RST were the modern day Leeds United of Moroccan football, ie they were one of the country's top clubs who had hit a lean patch, been relegated, and were now unable to escape the tentacles of lower division mediocrity.

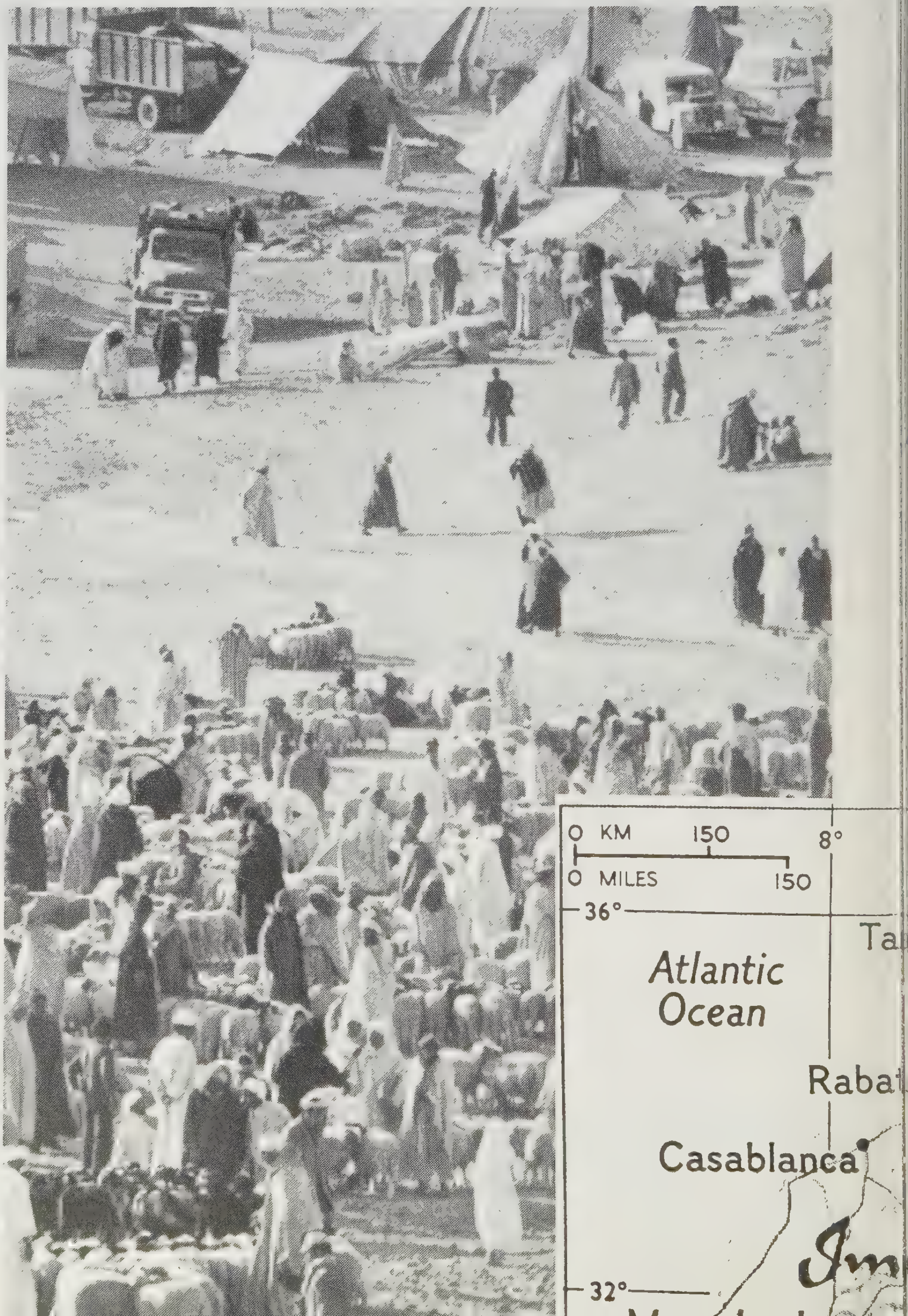
What they needed was Howard Wilkinson. What they thought they'd got when I arrived in Morocco in August 1978 was a brilliant young English superstar. What they soon found out, however, was that they had an inconsistent, cowardly, distinctly average plodder. The discrepancy between their expectations of me and reality arose from the interview for my job at the American School. Sensing that the headmaster, Mr Joseph McPhillips III, probably did not know that English sport is not organised along the same lines as American, I made a big fuss about how I had played *'soccer'* for Leeds University when they had won the Northern Universities League.

I was right. He was fooled into thinking that I was a top-class player, and gave me the job. He also went back to Morocco and broadcast to anyone who would listen that he had captured a star, hence my invitation to play for RST.

The standard of football in the Moroccan Second Division was pretty good. The level of skill was outstanding; the main weaknesses were a tendency to over-elaborate and a penchant for falling over dramatically in the box, hoping for a penalty. RST had a useful mixture of youth and experience while I was there, with one real gem. This was a midfielder called Rubio, an absolutely tremendous player with a quicksilver pair of feet. He was a former Moroccan international who had spent a couple of years playing in Belgium but hadn't settled in Europe. He was still only 28 or so, and yet he was no longer picked for Morocco. I could not quite fathom out why; my questions were always met with dark replies of 'politics'.

As soon as the people at RST tumbled to the fact that I was not the new Kevin Keegan, they wrote me off, thus totally failing to appreciate my real qualities. At least, that is my excuse! At any rate, I only started a handful of matches, and spent most of my time sitting on the bench as one of the five named substitutes, any two of whom could be used.

RST's home games were played in one of the best stadia in the country, a vast oval, with a 400 metre track encircling the pitch, and were regularly watched by crowds in



excess of 10,000. It was traditional in Morocco for the subs to go onto the pitch at half-time and knock a ball about. This would be the highlight of my week, apart from Thursday's training session, a full-scale practice match.

On the few occasions when I did play, I was embroiled in the thick of the action and never bothered by the thought of 10,000 people watching me. Half-time kickabouts were very different. The pressure of all those eyes really got to me, and I regularly found my feet turning to concrete as I hoofed shots over the bar or sliced simple crosses behind the goal.

My anxiety during half-time was heightened by the tension of keeping one eye out for Mustapha. Mustapha was the archetypal aged, semi-crippled kit manager/dogsbody figure. He was occasionally despatched from the dressing room by the Bulgarian coach (who would be conducting the half-time chat in execrable French) to summon one of us subs to get ready to take the field in the second half. When on such a mission, poor old Mustapha would attempt to hurry, but it would take him most of the rest period to limp along the tunnel and across the track and athletics area to reach us on the pitch. While he was doing his impersonation of the Hunchback of Notre Dame, we subs would stand around trying to look uninterested, or pretending we hadn't seen him, while inside hoping that the call would be for *me*. The sense of disappointment after it wasn't 'me' wasn't acute.

Although it was very frustrating being the permanent, not-exactly-Supersub, it was also a fascinating experience. During my first season, we challenged strongly for the one promotion spot from Division Two, our only real rivals being the team from the border town of Oujda. We were due to entertain the latter in our penultimate game, and this match shaped up to be the promotion decider. I was not even picked as sub for this one so I watched from the stands.

Oujda needed a draw to clinch promotion, and they duly got it in the most tedious and sterile goalless bore anyone would ever dread to see. There had been a lot of rumours all week around town that RST players (who were nominally semi-pro, although the club failed to pay us for months on end) had been 'bought' and certainly the way they played gave credence to such a theory, although much to my chagrin, no-one had tried to bribe *me*!

At the end of the match, a most peculiar incident occurred. As soon as the final whistle went, the Oujda players sprinted to the dugout, grabbed a briefcase and ran with it into the middle of the pitch. They were chased by a number of mysterious gentlemen in suits, and a brawl ensued in the centre circle. It was the afternoon's best tussle for possession but I could not fathom what it was all about. Could it be that the briefcase contained the reported bribe, and the Oujda players were trying to prevent it being handed over to the RST lads? What a shameful double-cross, after the Tangerines had fulfilled their half of the bargain. The centre of the pitch was soon a seething mass of players, officials and police, and after several minutes of confusion, everybody angrily trooped off. There was no sign of the briefcase.

"RST were the modern day Leeds United of Moroccan football... What they needed was Howard Wilkinson."

The crowd, which numbered about 40,000, seemed in no doubt that this behaviour confirmed their already strong suspicions that there was something very dodgy going on. They let loose a hail of stones and bottles as the players left the pitch, and then, with no other target available, pelted the police. There was a decent minor riot in progress, and it went on for five or ten minutes. Finally, a senior police officer bravely walked across to the stone-throwers making placating hand signals. When these met with no response, he tried a different approach — picking up the stones at his feet and hurling them back! This single-handed counter-attack was enough to disperse the crowd, who must have been getting bored.

This was not the best riot I saw at an RST game, though. In my second season, we went to play an away game at a God-forsaken hole a hundred miles south of Tangier called Sidi Slimane. We took seventeen players on the trip, and guess who was once again not asked to get changed. Instead, I was sent to sit in the tiny wooden stand, along with a few hundred locals. To my surprise I was joined there by one of my students from the American School, a young man called Sekowri, who had come down to watch the match.

The game was drawing to a close with RST leading by a goal to nil, when an ugly incident occurred. A Tangier forward, Ahmed, stood in front of the home keeper as he cleared the ball, and then suddenly threw himself on the ground, holding his face. The ref was watching the ball downfield, but when several RST players pointed out their colleague's farcical histrionics, he amazingly sent off the innocent custodian.

This, admittedly appalling, decision was not accepted with good grace. The keeper kicked a bucket of water into the stand, and then proceeded to demolish a wooden chair on his way to the dressing room. Our fellow occupants of the stand were not particularly impressed with the referee or the conduct of our No.9. As the closing minutes were played out, Sekowri pointed out to me that the crowd were occupying themselves, collecting stones and chipping off pieces of concrete from the terracing. I also noticed that Ahmed was very careful to confine his activities to the far side of the pitch.

Soon enough the final whistle went. The players and officials now had to go down a short passageway to the changing rooms which passed under the stand. The ref and Tangier team managed to get safely down this tunnel suffering only minor abuse — whistling, spitting, etc — but Ahmed did not dare accompany them, and was left standing, petrified, in the middle of the pitch. There were a number of policemen present, but they seemed reluctant to help the culprit. Eventually however, they grouped around him, and tore up the tunnel, receiving a fearful pounding from the accumulated missiles of the home fans.

The stand quickly emptied. Sekowri and I waited a couple of minutes and then went around the back of the stand to rejoin the rest of my team, only to find the away dressing room besieged by a horde of irate Sidi Slimonians. We considered trying to push our way through the mob, but rejected the plan. However, as we walked away from the dressing room, we saw a line of policemen with batons drawn bearing down on the crowd (and us!). They did not look like they would listen to polite explanations. Sekowri spotted a police Land Rover off to the right and we sprinted over to it. The officer lounging at the wheel sneered at us, one hand on his gun, cigarette in mouth. I don't know what Sekowri said to him, but something made him sit up straight; he told us to jump in and drove back to our hotel, where we were finally joined over an hour later by the rest of the team.

My most treasured moment in Morocco came shortly before I left to take up a new job in Greece (where I was *not* signed by Panathinaikos, funnily enough). An exhibition game was announced between Morocco and the team I support, Leeds United. By this time, the mysterious sands of infighting had shifted and Rubio was back in favour with the national selectors. For the match against Leeds in Casablanca, Rubio languished on the bench (I know how he felt) for the bulk of a terribly dull 0-0 draw. In the second half, the 20,000 fans started calling his name, and finally got their wish when he was introduced for the last ten minutes. He was a revelation, lighting up the entire match and inspiring at least three chances which his team-mates squandered. Then, in the last minute, he produced the moment of the match — he nutmegged Eddie Gray! So, despite two years of bench-warming, I can say that I played with someone who nutmegged my boyhood idol.

Robert Heath

HALL of FAME

It's 5.15 pm on Saturday afternoon. You've danced around the living room to the triumphant refrains of the *Sports Report* theme tune (it always sounds twice as stirring after an away win) and now it's a countdown to Stuart. The rolling Scottish 'r's of Larry Canning and the Oxford inflexions of Bryon Butler are merely warm-up acts for the main event, Mr Stuart Hall.

His match report is from a 0-0 draw at Maine Road. You can see him clearly in your mind's eye. He is wearing a 1978 shirt. Pink-coloured, it has thin stripes of yellow passing through it. The collar is starched white. Round his neck dangles a massive, gold pendant, on which is inscribed 'SH' Before your eyes can decipher the visual dyspepsia, he begins to talk in a language as colourful as his shirt. The man certainly knows his synonyms, antonyms and the benefits of an Equity Card.

"Hot pies; steaming, boiling, warming, joyously warming up the beleaguered spirits of the huddled masses, as they cling, glue-like, to the upright, fierce, dour girders that seem to pop up almost by coincidence, hotch-potched, like corn growing in a rainy field in early Spring. And the rain, driving relentlessly, whipping the backs of the players, seemingly forcing them onwards, with a steely determination that would put to shame Renton Laidlaw." He babbles on, mixing metaphors with no fear of either ridicule or admonishment from English scholars. Adjectives hit the bar and trickle along the goal-line. *"Dashing, darting, diving. The game twisted like something that twists quite a lot, like a gyroscope, forever turning, ducking, and oh, did it twist, and turn quite a lot."*

He manages a whole five minutes without mentioning anything of real relevance, but no one cares as they are led into a mesmeric state through his finely honed descriptive powers. At one point it looks like he might actually mention a player. *"The City No. 9, all muscles and cockles, jumped like a pale blue salmon breathlessly looking for air, swimming against the tide, and oh did he try. But thwarted, he flipped to the side of the river, gasping for breath, like a member of the Light Infantry regaining composure... "*

Soccer fans living in the North West are fortunate to get regular doses of cuddly Stuart. He is the co-presenter of a news programme called *Look North* but it should really be called *Look Hall*. His laughter, cheeky grin and crafty combing stirs memories for legions of randy pensioners. The cheery call of *"Hee up, luv,"* is sex on legs.

All week long he is forced to open supermarkets and wave to old ladies as he fills in time before his television programme and his radio commentaries. Obviously he suffers horrific withdrawal symptoms when having to go days without a swashbuckling football adjective. In a desperate bid to break up the monotony of being a showbiz personality, he opened a travel agency. He wanted to call it Stuart Hall International Travel (S.H.I.T.) but his shirt-maker advised against the move.

"The rolling Scottish 'r's of Larry Canning and the Oxford inflexions of Bryon Butler are merely warm-up acts for the main event, Mr Stuart Hall."

A brave man, indeed a leader of men, it is rumoured that he one day walked fearlessly through a picket of screaming pinko strikers at the TV studios. When challenged by the misanthropical militants he uttered the legend: *"I owe it to my public."* If only there were more like Stuart; the buses would run on time, we'd be able to buy shoes that lasted longer and policemen would be banned from having beards again.

One of Stuart's main loves is naturism. He likes to get the air to it. If you're ever in St Tropez, look out for the great man, he'll be the one with five gold necklaces swinging in time with his metaphors...

Mark Hodkinson

Late Arrival

Four years ago, my life was normal. I hadn't walked within cheering distance of a football ground and had probably watched no more than three minutes televised football in my entire life. During the last World Cup I would storm out of the house in disgust as my wife and son sat engrossed for hours. I ignored my son's pleadings to take him to a live match on the grounds that football was a ridiculous game, patronised by morons, and that having to watch a whole match would bore me shitless. In short, I hated football.

> ***"I asked around at work about our local biggish team and was told by various giggling people that it was Charlton Athletic."***

All this was a result of being the smallest in the class at school. When teams were being picked I was always left until last and even then was only taken grudgingly after being told *"If it comes near you kick it away."* The winters of my youth were spent standing in some obscure rear position, pulling my hands into my sleeves and trying not to die of exposure.

Then, one day, my son pestered me so much that I relented and agreed to take him to a match. I asked around at work about our local biggish team and was told by various giggling people that it was Charlton Athletic.

So, that Saturday it was off to Selhurst Park for a home (sic) match against West Ham. Arriving on the terraces ten minutes before kick-off, I was surprised, having previously believed the popular media image of football fans, not to see rivers of blood cascading down the standing areas or children being eaten alive. The whistle blew for kick-off and I gritted my teeth in preparation for the most boring two hours of my life. By 3.15, I was a totally transformed football junkie. It was the most exciting thing that I had ever seen (yes, we are talking about Charlton). They beat the Hammers 3-2 and completely took my breath away. During the seventeen-and-a-half-hour journey home to Woolwich (remember, this was only a home game) Pete and I re-enacted every kick in the game and it's been all down hill ever since.

In the Summer of 1987 I was up in the Scottish Highlands visiting the Loch Garten bird hide where people go to see the ospreys. A warden, on duty to answer questions about the birds, noticed my Charlton badge on my denim jacket. He confessed to being a Leeds supporter and was more than a bit miffed that the 'Addicks' had kept them in Division 2 after winning the play-offs.

Friendly discussions turned into a fairly heated argument about whether Robert Lee took a dive to get the free kick that resulted in Charlton drawing level. Families politely queued to ask how many eggs the birds laid, frightened to interrupt these two maniacs jabbing their fingers at each other and shouting *"And another thing..."* It was like Alf Garnett having a row with Stan Ogden as a line of bird watchers stretched out of the door.

While on holiday in Turkey in 1988 I queued for one and a half hours to use a public telephone box trying to contact a mate in the UK to find out the Charlton v Chelsea score. I couldn't work out the Turkish international phone system, used up two phone cards and still didn't make contact. I spent three days in purgatory, until I met someone who knew the score.

I went to Brussels at the time of the 1988 European Cup Final between Holland and the USSR and got severely lost trying to get a train to Maastricht, intending to watch the televised game in a Dutch bar and soak up some of the atmosphere. I couldn't find my way out of town on public transport and ended up sat in a decidedly seedy, non-alcoholic Muslim bar in the Arab quarter, drinking mint tea. All of the other customers, who were wearing long flowing white robes, were Holland supporters, apart from one Sidney Greenstreet lookalike who would stand in front of the TV each time Holland looked likely to score and hurl Arabic abuse at everyone else. I missed the last five minutes of the game when a fight broke out and somehow, in the ensuing confusion, I found myself out on the street.

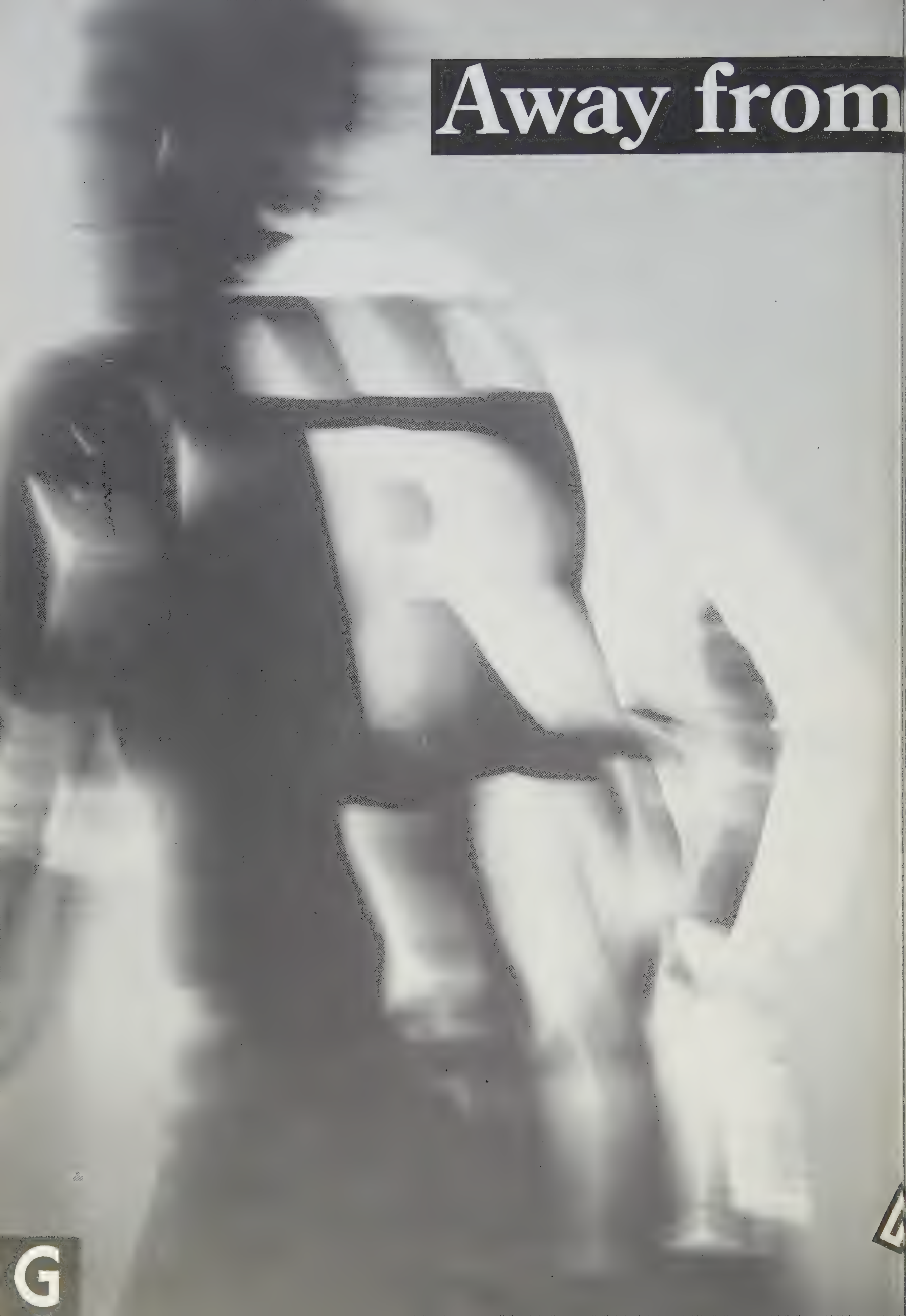
In the last four years, I have completely mystified everyone I know with my strange new addiction. I have travelled the length and breadth of the land to see Charlton, more often than not, get hammered. I've got two dents in the car after coming off the road on two separate occasions while watching two Sunday League sides take corners. I've played against a team of Turkish psychopaths in temperatures that would incinerate an iceberg, got nearly crushed to death while playing sweeper for my local pub side when I collided with the opposing team's 26-stone (I'm not exaggerating) goalkeeper, and I've lost count of the number of Saturday evenings spent in foul moods after a particularly miserable drubbing.

Is there any light at the end of the tunnel? Will I ever be normal again? I had already reserved my annual leave for the World Cup fortnight so that I could sit glued to the TV while normal people enjoyed themselves in the sun.

I'm a very mild mannered social worker, but my liking for Steve Bull haircuts and unfortunate passion for *Doc Marten* boots means that I get pulled aside and body searched before nearly every match. I can see from the looks on the faces of passing motorists that they think I'm one of the brainless morons that I once took football fans to be. How the worm turns.

Ben Reeve

Away from

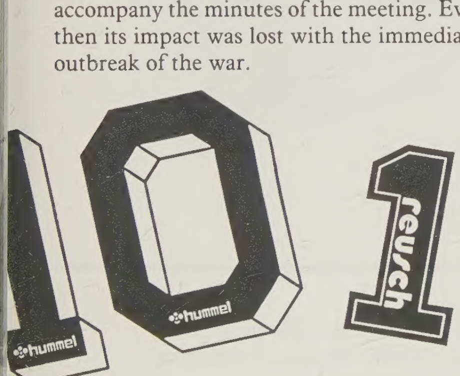


the numbers

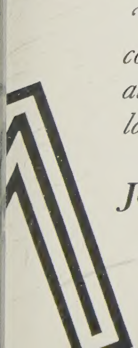
A flat overlooking Stamford Bridge would be a problem for any Arsenal supporter, but as a student of graphic design at the Royal College of Art I have also had to endure the regular display of possibly the most appallingly illegible shirt numerals in the history of the game. Chelsea's 1989-90 season numbers were not only ugly outlined slabs of no decent proportion (invaded by the inevitable unnecessary Umbro trademark), but were inexplicably striped in such a way as to entirely fail to contrast with the blue of their shirts.

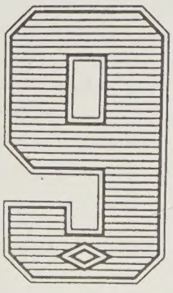
Inspired by the late Peter Jones' openly broadcast criticism of the state of the modern football shirt number, I chose to study this previously undocumented subject for my thesis at the RCA, ably assisted by the Football Association, the commentators at the BBC, sportswear manufacturers, the Referee's Association and not least the readers of *WSC*.

Ironically, I discovered that the first appearance of the shirt number was in fact at Stamford Bridge on 25th August 1928 (Chelsea *v* Swansea Town), although despite a very favourable response from spectators, the compulsory numbering of players did not occur until the 1939-40 season. It appeared that the football authorities regarded the numeral as an unwelcome device, promoting individualism and endangering the essential team spirit of the game. Even when finally adopted at the Football League board meeting of 23rd July 1939, the motion failed to raise the level of support necessary to effect a change in the Laws of the Game. Sadly, what should have been the single most important overnight change in 20th century football was brought about merely by a secretary's note to accompany the minutes of the meeting. Even then its impact was lost with the immediate outbreak of the war.



> *"If I can sum it up in a sentence, both commentators and spectators alike are at a disadvantage as a result of the latest shirt number designs."*
>
> ***John Motson BBCTV Sport***





The fear of promoting individualism was certainly evident in the wording of the instructions for the implementation of football shirt numbers: numbers were supposed to represent specific positional roles (from 2 for right back to 11 for left wing) rather than individual players. Unfortunately, this idea depended on every team playing with the same formation of goalkeeper, two full backs, three half backs and five forwards: an absurd assumption even in the 1930s and a meaningless concept for the 1990s. Herbert Chapman's tactical experimentation had made a mockery of this system even before it was introduced, and it would have been impossible to apply to the 'Total Football' of the Dutch national team of the 1970s, in which players exchanged roles as play determined.

Cesar Menotti's Argentinian World Champions of 1978 abandoned the positional representation altogether, simply following an alphabetical squad list which saw midfield maestro Ardiles wearing No. 2. Football programmes have long since abandoned team lists as pictorial formations: only sophisticated television graphics can cope with the complex tactical variations of the modern game, to which shirt numbers give no clue.

While the tactical significance of the numeral is highly questionable, there can be no doubt about the need for a system to enable the visual identification of individual players. This has been seriously obstructed by the decline in the legibility of the football shirt number — an unfortunate side-effect of England's 1966 World Cup triumph, which made plain the enormous marketing potential of football.

The visual identification of players is governed by the fifteen hopelessly inadequate words of Law IV (3): *"The goalkeeper shall wear colours which distinguish himself from the other players and the referee."* Football authorities are apparently content with Law IV (3), even though it was written in 1898. Those who would commercially exploit the game are certainly content with Law IV (3), and the visual identification of players has suffered as a result of their exploitation.

Teams now no longer play in their traditional club colours, but in the latest patterned fabrics of their shirt manufacturer: the game has become both a 90 minute television commercial and a grass catwalk show to promote spin-off leisurewear. The inevitable seasonal redesign of team strips has produced such a variety of shirt numbers as to fill a Letraset catalogue, each design available with quite appalling typographical detail, which adds to the general decline in standards of legibility. Sadly, no football shirt number is complete without the shirt manufacturer's trademark, and the numeral is now no longer the most important symbol on the back of the football shirt.

My thesis concluded that the fiftieth anniversary of the introduction of the football shirt number was no cause for celebration.

My subsequent work at the RCA, however, has been more positive: researching, designing and producing a credible alternative to the numeral — the football shirt letter, first displayed at the RCA 1990 graduates' exhibition.

The exhibition included the typographic manual 'Law IV (3.5)' which contained an extensive rewriting of Law IV (3) of some 2,000 words, instructions for the correct implementation of the football shirt letter, and an explanation of the adoption of the alphabet for the visual identification of players: *"The alphabet, free from the traditional tactical significance of numbers, would never be used to represent positional roles; instead a player would be allocated a personal letter which only he would wear for his club, at last providing the spectator with a consistent means of identification whether or not the player was selected to play...the alphabet is also more efficient than numbers: with twenty-six characters instead of nine (the 0 never having been used) it avoids problematic double-character configurations except in the largest squads...most importantly, however, the football shirt letter would itself be a symbol of the need for change within the game."*

The exhibition also included the first alphabet designed specifically for the football shirt, displayed on a full set of England shirts redesigned to comply with Law IV (3.5) (featuring the Cross of St George, the FA badge reduced to white on white, subliminal advertising by Stanley Tools Ltd and no manufacturer's trademark whatsoever). Each character is isolated within a square of solid colour of maximum contrast. The alphabet is called 'Mo Johnston Roman' after Maurice Johnston, who, as the first Catholic to play for Glasgow Rangers in modern times, is himself a symbol of change.

Rupert Bassett

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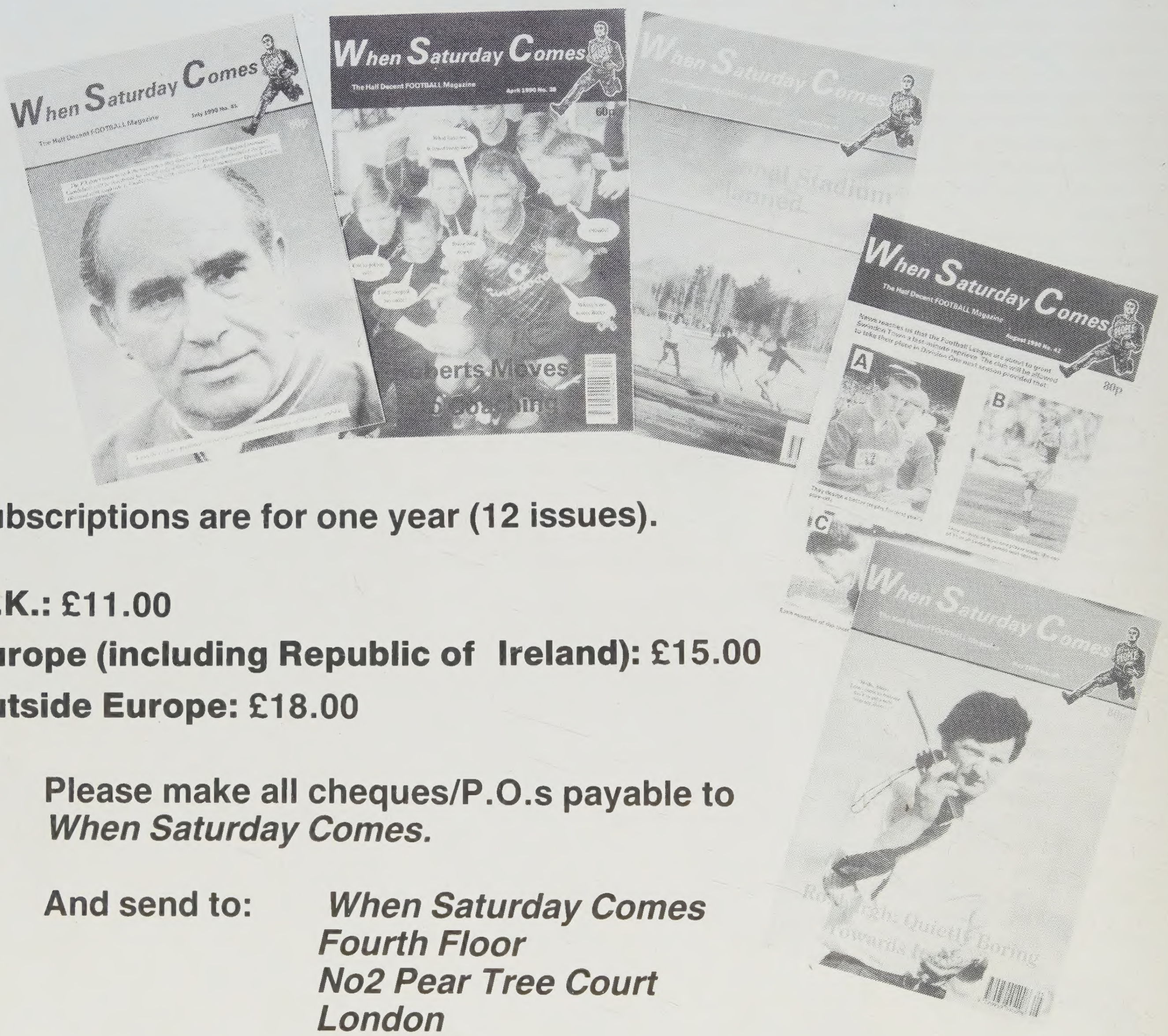

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Quiz Answers 1. Raich Carter 2. Hounslow Town 3. Hordern Colliery Welfare Band 4. Harmony; Star; Bandit; Miner 5. Hartlepool 6. Burnley 7. Hugo Sanchez; Vladimir Bessonov; Salvatore Schillaci; Emilio Butragueno; Carlos Valderrama 8. Maurice Norman 9. Accrington and Preston 10. Dominique Rocheteau 11. CB Fry 12. Leeds; Crewe; Oldham; Stoke; Aldershot; 13. France 14. Josef Bozsik 15. Egypt's President Sadat had signed a peace treaty with Israel some time before the match. *"A sell out"*, said Gaddafi. 16. Bob Hardisty 17. Bruce Rioch 18. Chesterfield 19. Because there was greyhound racing at Wembley that day 20. Erwin Blobb 21. Brian Stubbs 22. Reading

Picture Quiz — a) Steve Kember b) John Osborne c) Tommy Gemmell

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